

# **GOD** **STORIES**

**Book 6**

**And More**

**Living CHRISTMAS Daily**

**Dr. Gayle & Myrna Brogdon**

## IN MEMORY OF



**Louise J. Gerber** (age 94 and a widow) from Bluffton, Indiana greatly impacted my life (Myrna Brogdon) and became a special friend within the two years I knew her. She will forever be remembered as a woman of faith who loved Jesus, her family, and those around her.

During our visits, she'd relate how she loved reading and giving others the GOD STORIES booklets. Also, there were several precious times that we'd pray together aloud for our families, the lost, and one another. One time I asked Louise, "If you had only one thing to tell me, what would it be?" She replied,

**"Always stay close to Jesus!"**

The sun set on an amazing life on September 8, 2023. Yet, Louise immediately became so alive in her eternal home, Heaven, with the SON!

## **BOOK 6: GOD STORIES And More**

*“Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!” Psalm/ 107:8, 15, 21, 31*



### **Book 6: GOD STORIES And More...**

**Living CHRISTMAS Daily** is a collection of encouraging and inspiring stories written by ordinary people about an extraordinary God and what He has done in, for, and through their lives. They are true stories about God connecting with people concerning their

experiences during the Christmas holidays. Also, interspersed in this booklet are biblical principles and uplifting messages on how to daily live out your walk with Jesus Christ by “Living Christmas Daily”. In addition, sprinkled throughout this booklet are recipes to enjoy during the Christmas holidays and year ‘round.

As you turn the pages, you may recall your own amazing encounters with God or find yourself passionately desiring to know God more and have a real personal relationship with Him every day.

**31-DAY DEVOTIONAL:** This booklet may also be used as a 31-day devotional. As you read the stories designated for each day, ask the Lord, “What do you want to reveal to me? In what way(s) may I apply to my life the message(s) and/or the scripture passage(s)? Then pray and do what He shows you.

Our prayer is that everyone who reads this booklet will draw closer to the Lord Jesus Christ and for those who don’t know Jesus Christ as Savior, we pray you will.

Walking with Jesus,

*Gayle & Myrna*

Dr. Gayle and Myrna Brogdon

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## DAY 1: THE TRUE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS

*"...And all these things are from God who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and who has given us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them..." 2 Corinthians 5:18-19*



**Ron Corzine**  
Ft. Worth, Texas

For many, Christmas is the time of year when colorful lights and decorations go up, people plan parties, and shoppers go crazy, looking for bargains.

Christmas means something different to everyone. To some people, it is a time of sadness, loneliness, and despair. For others, it is a time of celebration and rejoicing.

Let's look into the deeper meaning of Christmas. It is a celebration of the birth of a Savior, Jesus Christ who would bring much-needed hope to this world. He was a gift from

God for all mankind.

2,000 years ago, this special child was born in the small town of Bethlehem to a young couple named Joseph and Mary. Although she was a virgin, God chose her to carry His son, the Messiah.

When Mary and Joseph reached Bethlehem, they sought a place to stay, but nothing was available. An innkeeper directed them to the right place for Him to be born.

After Jesus was born, some gathered and brought Him gifts. Today, gift exchange is a common practice. It symbolizes the spirit of giving and generosity. Just as God gave us His beloved son to redeem us and be our example of how to live, give, and be prepared to die.

So why was that baby boy Jesus so special? Because He would live among us as an example of how we should live with one another. His desire when He fulfilled His purpose in coming was to bring us back to God. One of my favorite verses in the New Testament is:

*2 Corinthians 5:18-19*

*18 "...And all these things are from God who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and who has given us the ministry of reconciliation: 19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them..."*

My prayer is that you and I will allow Christ the Messiah to become the reason for all we think, say, and do. May each of you have a wonderful and Blessed Christmas.



## DAY 2: GOD'S STORY: THE CHRISTMAS STORY

The Christmas story found in Luke 2:1-20 is a beautiful and inspiring account of the birth of Jesus Christ. Here is the story:

<sup>1-5</sup>And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

<sup>6-8</sup>And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

<sup>9-15</sup> And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

<sup>16-20</sup>And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.



### DAY 3: CHRISTMAS DAY JOY

“Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning.” Psalm 30:5



**Darrell Scott**  
Lone Tree, Colorado

My daughter, Rachel Joy Scott, was the first student killed in the Columbine High School massacre on April 20, 1999. She was inspired by Anne Frank to keep a diary and she left 6 of them behind at her death.

Her story would be told to over 35 million people in live settings over the next two decades. It has won 3 television Emmy Awards and been featured in a major motion picture titled, *I Am Not Ashamed*.

Rachel had prayed a simple prayer in her diary a year and a month before she died. Here is what she wrote:

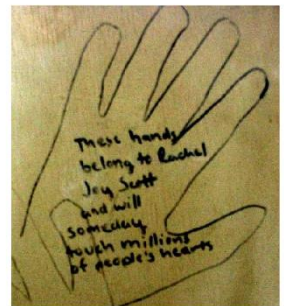
3/1/98  
Dear God,  
I want you to use me  
to reach the unreached

She chose to reach out to the new kids at school, the special needs students, the ones who were bullied, and the ones who were simply overlooked.

After her death, I traveled around the world sharing her story and seeing thousands of young people experience a spiritual awakening at the end of our meetings. In Sydney Australia, I spoke in the Olympic Center to a packed audience and over 1,400 young people came forward and became new believers.

Over the years, I met with very influential people who had been deeply touched by Rachel’s story. Elton John, Chuck Norris, President Bush, President Clinton, President Trump, Reba McEntire, House Speaker Mike Johnson, Vice-President Pence, and many more.

By December of 2002, our team of speakers had already shared her story with over 3 million people. But we were destined to experience a miracle on Christmas Day of that year. My daughter, Dana, had moved Rachel’s dresser away from the wall for the first time since she had died and discovered something that Rachel had written when she was only 13 years old.



Rachel had drawn an outline of her hands and in the center wrote, “These hands belong to Rachel Joy Scott and will someday touch millions of people’s hearts.”

This was the greatest Christmas present our family could have ever hoped for!

## **DAY 4: THE GIFT OF A STRONG TOWER AT CHRISTMAS**

*"The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it and is safe."  
Proverbs 18:10*

As I was preparing for another Season of Celebrating the Birth of our Savior, I received a call on Monday December 13th, 2021 that would forever change our lives.

Our oldest daughter, Rochelle, had been sick. I called to her apartment manager and asked them to do a wellness check as I had not heard from her for two days.

At 10:35 am, I received a call at A Harvest of Health where I worked. It was the Allen County coroner's office and they found her deceased in her apartment from flu, dehydration, and pneumonia.



**Cindy Geisel  
Bluffton, Indiana**

I remember collapsing onto a chair someone brought out to me and then went into the back room and opened to Proverbs 18:10. Truly, the Lord became my strong tower, as I found myself running into it to feel the safety and comfort that only He could give.

The next minutes, hours, days, and weeks became a blur as I placed calls to notify family members. We planned a funeral instead of a Christmas celebration. We picked out a Memorial Stone for Rochelle, thinking of that "Precious Stone" that a "Strong Tower" is built upon.

The days following the funeral were spent cleaning out her apartment in Fort Wayne instead of cleaning our house for our Family Christmas.

Two of our grandchildren took Rochelle's beloved cat, Chloe, and gave her a home until Chloe also passed. That Christmas was a Memorial Christmas as we shared about the empty chair where she usually sat, sang songs that she so loved to sing, shared memories of Rochelle, and thanked God for bringing us to His Strong Tower so that we could run to Him and feel safe.

Do we miss her? Absolutely! Can we rejoice even though it is painful? Yes! Why? Because, we know she is safe with the Lord, her Strong Tower, and we as the righteous and redeemed can run to it in anticipation of seeing our beloved Rochelle again safely in the arms of her Strong Tower. If you don't know Jesus as your Strong Tower, please come to Him today so that you can run into His arms of safety and meet your loved ones!! That Christmas we learned the Gift of the Strong Tower!

## DAY 5: CHRISTMAS MIRACLE



**Carl Flowers, Sr.**  
**Edinburg, Texas**

The weather had changed in Deep South Texas. It had gone from our normal 100-plus degrees to our winter cold of 60s to 50s and of course, we believed it to be cold. With the changing of the weather also comes the changing of seasons and holidays. We moved quickly from Thanksgiving to Christmas and many hopeful children believed for their most wanted Christmas presents. Many people going on with the joy of Christmas and wishing Christmas greetings to all.

The church where I was the senior associate pastor put together a community outreach to hand out Christmas gifts to needy families in a couple of neighborhoods in the city. As we were going through handing out gifts and seeing smiles on the children's and parents' faces, it seemed like just another Christmas outreach of handing out gifts until the senior pastor and I reached a particular house. Outside by the gate were two kids, a boy and a girl, standing there with hope in their eyes as our trailer passed and the group was singing Christmas carols. Pastor and I approached the door of the house and were greeted by the parents with tears in their eyes as momma held another child in her arms and dad stood behind her with his hand on her shoulder. They said this is truly answered prayers as I looked at this tiny house that was just only one room probably no bigger than a regular size bedroom. In it was a bed that represented their bedroom, a small dining table, next to it was a stove and kitchen sink, above the table was a small television, and on the table a small Christmas tree with nothing under it. Yet as little as it may have seemed to me that this family had, it was evident through their tears they had a relationship with Jesus. As we handed the children their gifts, faces full of joy and smiles, their parents said we put the tree up and knew we could not buy any gifts but they were at least going to provide the children a tree.

When they heard the Christmas carols, the kids ran outside and the momma turned to Dad and said what is going on. After we handed them the gifts, the momma told us, we had been praying and believing that somehow God would provide a way for our children to get at least one gift each and when we knocked on the door, they knew God not only heard them but sent Angels bearing gifts as their answered prayers. God showed up and blessed this family with a Christmas I am sure they will never forget. I am thankful and humbled that God chose to use us that night as His instruments to Bless that family.



## DAY 6: TREASURED THINGS

*“So they came in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as He lay in the <sup>[1]</sup>manger. When they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child. And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart.” Luke 2:16-19*

Mary was visited by an angel and told she had found favor with God; she would give birth to the Savior. Elizabeth declared that Mary was blessed because she had believed the word the angel had spoken would be fulfilled (and it was). Shepherds visited her the night of Jesus’s birth, telling what the angel had declared about Him. Later, in the temple, Simeon and Anna both spoke words of blessings about Jesus. All these things Mary treasured in her heart.



**Paul Diehl**  
**Harlingen, Texas**

I get nostalgic at Christmas, so I can identify with Mary. I think about the things only Jesus could have done in our lives. How God brought people into our lives that resulted in our receiving Christ. How Debbie and I met and later married. The prophetic word that we would someday be missionaries in China, and the fulfillment of that word. A word from a 17-year-old boy in Guatemala that I would have to get serious about language learning. Then becoming a teacher of English as a Second Language became the vehicle for ministry in China and my livelihood to the present. I remember the doors God opened for us to share the love of Jesus in parks, in hospitals, in other countries, on vacations, and at work. While there, we watched our sons grow into such wonderful men, experienced God’s provision and delivering power in difficult times. I reflect on these things, and, like Mary, I worship Him.

This Christmas, take time to reflect on the things God has done in your life and write them in the space below. If you don’t have a relationship with Jesus, you can start by asking Him to forgive you and come into your heart. This is why Jesus came so many years ago, to take away your sins. Then you can start your life with Him. Merry Christmas!

### WHAT GOD HAS DONE IN MY LIFE:

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## **DAY 7: A FIRST CHRISTMAS AS A SINGLE MOM**

*“All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us.” – 2 Corinthians 1:3-4*



**Dora Bernal**  
**Brownsville, Texas**

That first Christmas as a single mom was the scariest, I didn't know how I was going to provide the basic necessities for my seven children, much less how I could afford Christmas presents. But God showed himself faithful again and again. I held on to the promise that God was Father to the fatherless and husband to the widow. As my husband I trusted that He would provide and did He ever.

That Christmas we received loads of presents from schools, churches and even the radio station. We received so many gifts we were able to give some away. One of our favorite family traditions was baking Christmas cookies but that was also the year our oven broke. It was just days before Christmas when an appliance repair man knocked at our door, because someone had paid to have our oven repaired and the cookies we baked that year were the best cookies ever. There I was, a single mother of seven, barely scraping by and not knowing how we were going to make it, but that was the Christmas my children always remember as the Christmas God provided for us. He was there with us, and He would see us through.

Years later I was honored to open my house to a women's LIFE group. Every week our house was full of single mothers with small children, and I was determined to love and be Jesus to these women, the way God loved and others were Jesus to me. A couple of weeks before Christmas, my children and I invited these wonderful ladies and their rambunctious children to a Christmas party with lots of food, games, and a sit-down meal. We had a great time. The kids had been practicing singing Christmas carols for weeks and were so excited to sing for their moms. As the children were distracted singing Christmas carols, bags of presents were snuck out the window for the mothers to give their children for Christmas. Knowing that the heart of these moms was for their children, we made sure to give each mom a special gift, as it was likely the only gift they would receive that year.

Because we had struggled all those years ago God put us in place to bless these single moms years later. We thank God for the opportunity to be used to bless others.

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## DAY 8: HOW SOON WE FORGET!

*“And the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:7*

My husband was diagnosed with stage 3 colorectal cancer in October of 2021. I remember going straight to the hospital bathroom to compose myself after getting the news and just feeling a panic grip me. Then, unable to think of the right words, I just prayed “God, please be with us!” Immediately, a peace that I’ve never felt before just washed over me. I completely understood what Philippians 4:7 meant.



**Karen Isch  
Bluffton, Indiana**

Then fast-forward two months and our concerned son who lives in Australia flew home to see his dad and spend Christmas with the family. While he was here, he came down with Covid.

After taking daily Covid tests, he could not produce a negative result which he would need to get on his flight back to Sydney. He kept moving back his flight. I was getting more and more anxious as I was scheduled to drive my mother to Florida. How could I leave when I didn’t know how long Kevin would be stuck in America. I became more and more upset. I kept praying for a negative result and couldn’t understand why God was not helping.

Then it struck me – Had I asked God to “be with us”? I was just telling Him what I thought should be done. As soon as I released the problem into God’s hands, to do it His way, I felt that same peace wash over me again. How could I have forgotten so soon to ask God to just be with us. Kevin’s tests were still reading positive, but God found another way and just at the last minute, after an extra two weeks, Kevin got a doctor’s release and a flight home. Why do we ever doubt that God is in control? He just wants us to trust Him.

## JALAPENA PEPPER SPREAD DIP

**Jodi Reinhard – Bluffton, Indiana**

### Ingredients & Instructions:

9 x 13 pan

Mix together:

- 2 (8 oz.) cream cheese
- 1 c. mayonnaise

Then add:

- (Optional) 1 (4oz) chopped green chilies, drained
- 4 to 6oz jalapenos drained

Put on top:

- 1 c. parmesan cheese

## DAY 9: COAT OF MANY COLORS



**Suzanne Soto**  
La Feria, Texas

It had been a tough year. The economy was taking a nose dive. Alex's construction and foundation repair business was not doing well. Contracts had been slim and foundation repair jobs cancelled out at the last minute. I had a job working for the school district, so my paycheck was steady, but still not enough to support what used to be two incomes. And with Christmas coming up I felt the added pressure of having to buy gifts, if we could even afford that, for the family.

**BUT GOD** gave me the idea to make banana and apple-zucchini breads and sell them to the teachers at school. I would bake the minute I got home from school and work till 9 pm preparing the breads. God was so gracious to provide orders! With the money I made, we got through November and December paying all our bills.

It was time for Christmas at Alex's family house. They had no idea the extent of the financial struggles we were having that year. I remember receiving a gift from Alex's sister, Alicia. She gave me a lightweight jacket made of red, blue and black tiny plaids. Immediately I thought of Joseph in the Bible with his coat of many colors. God's love and favor rested on Joseph and his garment was given to him by his father because he loved Joseph very much. This jacket was my coat of many colors, a reminder of God's love for me. A reminder that God doesn't forget about me, no matter what I go through, He always sees.

## WHAT CHRISTMAS MEANS TO ME



**Edith Saldivar**  
Harlingen, Texas

I became a Christian at the age of 35. I always think of all the years I wasted. Back then, I had no room for Jesus in my life. When Christmas comes, I think of the Nativity story and how there was no room in the inn for Mary and Joseph (indirectly for Jesus). Every Christmas for me is an opportunity to reflect on my life and make sure that I have room for Jesus. I need to make sure that life's circumstances have not taken over my heart or life. Christmas is my opportunity to thank Jesus for

His sacrifice, mercy and grace. Christmas is my time to Rejoice in knowing that He is my Savior!!!



## **DAY 10: CHRISTMAS MIRACLE**

My young husband and I were enjoying our teaching careers. He was a US History teacher and I taught adorable first graders. Even though we were fulfilled in our careers, we felt a void and desired to begin our own family but this part of our life wasn't happening. We both went the doctor route and we were informed that physically we should not be having a problem conceiving. I took fertility pills that we knew could cause multiple births. We talked about adopting but my husband said only if we find out we can't have our own children. I prayed that God would change my husband's mind because I knew sometimes you never find out the problem.



**Carol Gerber  
Ossian, Indiana**

Then we purchased some land to build our home so we agreed not to look further into adopting so my teaching job would pay for our purchase. Well, God had other plans.

I got the flu the Monday before Christmas break which is not convenient for a first-grade teacher. My husband stayed home with sympathy sickness which had never happened before. This was back in the day with only land phone lines and no answering machines. About 10 am, I got up to shower hoping to feel better and the phone rang. It was the nurse from the doctor's office that I had been seeing trying to get pregnant. (That office knew we were both teachers and shouldn't be home at 10 on a Monday morning Dec 21<sup>st</sup>.) I was told that a baby was born on Saturday and was in need of a family. My reply was we just had purchased our land and I needed to teach to pay for it. The nurse said she would give us a half hour to decide because there was another couple they could call. I got off the phone crying and shared with my husband. He said "Call Back, Call Back" but I was crying too much. My husband called back and said we have to have the rest of the day for this BIG decision.

We right away called my husband's parents and said we needed to talk to them about this situation and they should be praying. By the time we got to his parents, we were at total peace. We called the doctor's office and found out we were getting a baby girl. Three days later, we took clothes to the hospital for our lawyer to take into the maternity ward. Our first-born God given daughter was handed to us on Christmas Eve at 4:00 pm. I finished the year teaching because I had a student teacher the second semester and couldn't stop my job right then. God provided a young married past student of my husband who lived in the apartment next door to babysit for our newborn. Praise the Lord all the time. All the time praise the Lord!

## DAY 11: THE GRINCH CAN'T STEAL ONE'S CHRISTMAS

*"Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it." Proverbs 4:23*



**Ron Corzine**  
Ft. Worth, Texas

As you may know, "The Grinch Who Stole Christmas" is a classic children's story written by Dr. Seuss. It tells the tale of the Grinch, a grumpy and mean-spirited creature, who despises Christmas and decides to steal it.

But really the Grinch cannot steal one's Christmas unless they allow him to. The essence of the story is a lesson about the true meaning of the holiday season. Christmas is not solely about material possessions or external decorations; it's about the spirit of love, joy, peace, kindness, and togetherness.

We know the Grinch had a change of heart in the story; therefore, I believe this shows us that Christmas cannot be stolen or diminished by external factors. The holiday season we call Christmas is about the warmth and generosity in people's hearts, the joy of being with loved ones, and the spirit of giving rather than receiving.

The spirit of Christmas is in my heart. And the Scripture encourages us to guard our hearts. Proverbs 4:23 says, "Guard your heart with all diligence for everything you do flows from it."

So, even if someone were to try to "steal" Christmas from me they would have to affect my heart by their words or actions. And since my heart is guarded, they would be unable to rob me of all that God has placed there.

### COCONUT CRANBERRY CHEWS

Anne Corzine – Ft. Worth, Texas

**Mix well:**

1 ½ c. butter	2 T. grated orange peel
2 c. sugar	2 tsp. vanilla
1 large egg	

**Add:**

3 ¼ c. flour	1 ½ c. dried cranberries
1 tsp. baking powder	1 ½ c. coconut
¼ tsp. salt	

Roll into 1" balls and bake @ 350 for 12-15 min.

Best if not too brown





## DAY 12: CONTENTMENT AT CHRISTMAS

*"I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength." Philippians 4:12-13*

My missionary family happened to be traveling in Mexico the December of my sophomore year in high-school. It was definitely a different Christmas celebration than I was used to. We had tamales wrapped in banana leaves. Those who played instruments practiced so we could play some Christmas music for the team we were living with. The area we set up camp did not have running water. We used a washboard to clean clothes. Sheep and rabbits donated to the team were butchered to feed everyone. It was a very different way of life. I remember waking up one morning to find both my Bible and purse had been stolen from the large canvas tent where we slept.



**Leigh Aten**  
Brownsville, Texas

Other Christmas years brought wonderful times with all our family gathered, lots of presents and familiar and favorite foods. Still another Christmas found us explaining that we would not be able to afford to exchange gifts that year. We enjoyed the family togetherness. As time passed, it brought the loss of our parents. We had a beautiful dream trip to Hawaii in December for our 30th anniversary. We were able to give to families in need. Yet for Christmas, we were missing the beloved family members now in Heaven.

Not every Christmas is the same. Material goods come and go. Family members eventually pass. The one thing that is constant is the love of Christ and the strength He gives us that enables us to live in contentment.

## CREAM ROLLS – 1 PAN RECIPE

Marie Frauhiger – Bluffton, Indiana

### Mix:

- 2 eggs beaten
- ½ cup sugar
- ¾ cup whole wheat flour
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. vanilla
- 1/8 tsp. salt



### Icing:

- 1 egg beaten
- ¼ tsp. vanilla
- ½ tsp. coconut extract
- ¼ cup Crisco
- 1 ½ cups powdered sugar

- Makes 8 – 13 rolls
- Put parchment paper in pan
- Bake at 375 for 9 min.
- When baked, turn upside down on a newspaper sprinkled with powdered sugar. Spread icing on. Roll and cut.

## DAY 13: WHAT CHRISTMAS MEANS TO ME



**Kristen Brogdon  
Harlingen, Texas**

Christmas time is one of my favorite times of the year. Surrounding myself with the people I love and cherish the most is my family. “FAMILY” is what the meaning of Christmas is to me.

Being a part of the family of God is the greatest blessing bestowed upon believers and one that should drive us to our knees, in humble adoration. We can never do anything to deserve it for it is His gift of love, mercy, and grace to us, yet we are called to become sons and daughters of the living God (Romans 9:25-26). As Christmas approaches, I reflect on family and know that there is no greater blessing than knowing Christ and having a personal close relationship with our Lord and Savior.

**F** – FOLLOWING: It is the Lord your God you must follow and Him you must revere. Keep His commands and obey Him, serve Him and hold fast to Him. Deuteronomy 13:4

**A** – ALPHA & OMEGA: I am the Alpha and Omega, the first and last, the beginning and end. Rev. 22:13

**M** – Jehovah  
**MEKODDISHKEM**: “The Lord who sanctifies you.” (set apart) Leviticus 20:7 – Sanctify yourselves the refuge, and be ye holy, for I am the Lord your God.

**I** – I am the light of the world, whoever follows me will have the light of life. John 8:12

**L** – LOVE: “...love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind” ...” Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” Matthew 22:37, 39

**Y** – YAHWEH –He brings into existence whatever exists. Isaiah 44:24

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## DAY 14: A CHANGED CHRISTMAS

*“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever.” Hebrews 13:8*

What is Christmas? Jesus’ birthday! That is what I was always taught. I believe Christmas and Jesus go together. In my opinion, you can’t have one without the other.

I love being with our family and friends but especially at Christmas time. This past Christmas (2022) was different though. I lost both of my parents within a 3-week span. My dad passed on Thanksgiving Day and my mom the 19th of December. So needless to say, the holidays were a lot different than they had been in the past. Where we would usually spend Christmas celebrating with family and thanking God for His blessings of our year, it was a bit lonely.

But then I was reminded of one thing that didn’t change. Jesus, He is the same yesterday, today and forever. I love my heritage and what we were taught over the years. As we move forward in the years to come, we will continue to celebrate Christmas and Jesus every year. We will continue to carry on certain traditions.

One thing I learned from last year is that no one knows when we will leave this world. So don’t take life for granted. We are not promised tomorrow. We all need to love our family and friends as Jesus did. Live today as if it’s your last day on this earth.



**Terrie Hale Freeze**  
Aransas Pass, Texas

## CHOCOLATE PRETZEL RODS

Carol Gerber – Ossian, Indiana



### Ingredients:

1 ½ cups semi-sweet chocolate chips  
1 bag (10 oz.) pretzel rods (28 pretzels)  
Colored sprinkles  
Cellophane bags (online or local candy shop)  
Ribbon to tie bags

### Instructions:

- Melt chocolate in medium microwave-safe bowl at HIGH, stirring occasionally, until melted and smooth.
- Dip 1 end of pretzels in chocolate mixture, then arrange on waxed-paper.
- While still wet, decorate with sprinkles.
- Let cool at room temperature about 30 minutes.
- Place chocolate pretzel rod in cellophane bag and tie with colorful ribbon or tie.

## DAY 15: FIRST MISSION TRIP ADVENTURE

*“I lift up my eyes to the mountains—where does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. He will not let your foot slip—he who watches over you will not slumber; indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep” “the LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.” Psalm 121:1-4, 8*



**Carol Schwarz  
Harlingen, Texas**

missed the “Y.”

Upon arriving at the next city, I learned that yes, we had missed our stop. I commented to the ticket agent, “Now I know how Mary and Joseph felt on Christmas Eve long ago.”

The driver immediately exclaimed, “I’m driving back north right away.” Smiling, the agent said, “Get on board,” and didn’t charge us for the return trip. Relieved, my mission teammate and I boarded the bus. My young companion slept, and the driver and I chatted. It just so happened that he knew the children’s home directors. Not only did he take us past the “Y” and into town, but he also took us to our destination. He honked; as the directors appeared and greeted us, he wished us a Merry Christmas, and disappeared into the predawn mist.

God’s undeniable grace had provided a protected beginning to a boy’s first mission trip adventure.

Early one Christmas Eve, I flew from Ohio to the Texas-Mexico border with a 12-year-old who was excited about his first mission trip. After we landed, friends drove us to the Mexican bus station; from there we headed south for the three-hour bus trip to our destination, a children’s home in the mountains. I knew the highway would be curving all the way to the “Y” in the road, where we would disembark and take a taxi to the children’s home.

Suddenly, I realized that the road was now straight. “Oh, no,” I thought, “I dozed off, and we



## **DAY 16: MOST MEMORABLE CHRISTMAS TRIP**

Taking a Viking riverboat cruise on the Danube River was a great way to experience our honeymoon in a unique and memorable way during the Christmas holiday season.

We visited many medieval towns and grand cities and thoroughly enjoyed visiting the Abbey in Austria, celebrating Vienna's musical heritage at a concert, going to the zoo where a Nativity scene was displayed, as well as visiting the



**Dr. Jack and Kristen Brogdon  
Harlingen, Texas**

delightful Christmas markets. These markets were lit up with decorations, offered local crafts, and delicious local Christmas delicacies.

This Danube River cruise provided a unique perspective on the cities we visited -- from enjoying the stunning views from the water to touring the cities and towns as well as seeing how Christmas is observed there. Our most memorable Christmas holiday trip on the "Blue Danube" was one we loved and won't forget!

## **CHRISTMAS PEPPERMINT DESSERT**

**Karen Isch - Bluffton, Indiana**

### **Ingredients:**

- 1 large pkg Oreos, crushed
- ½ cup butter, melted
- ½ gallon pink peppermint ice cream
- 1 (14 oz.) jar of Hot Fudge
- 1 (8 oz.) Cool Whip

### **Instructions:**

- Mix Oreos and butter. Spread half in a 9x13 pan and pat down.
- Freeze
- Soften the ice cream and spread over the frozen crust.
- Freeze
- Spread fudge over the frozen ice cream layer.
- Freeze
- Spread Cool Whip over the hot fudge layer and top with the remaining Oreo crumbs.

\* \* \* \* \*



## DAY 17: CHRISTMAS WITH JESUS



**Linda K. Eltzroth  
Markle, Indiana**

It was the end of October 2015 when we found out my husband, Gary, had stage 4 cancer. The doctors said they couldn't cure his cancer but with radiation and chemo he could possibly have a year. It felt like our world had been turned upside down! So, for the next year, we would spend it together going to the VA doctor appointments and praying the Lord would heal Gary. God had blessed us with 32 years together! Gary passed away on Oct. 9, 2016. The Lord did heal him in heaven. The holidays were coming and my heart was broken into a million pieces. With the Lord's grace, mercy, peace, and unconditional love I made myself get ready for

Christmas for my family.

One day right before Christmas, I received a very special gift from my friend Peggy in Florida. It was a Christmas ornament that said "Merry Christmas From Heaven! I love you all dearly. Now don't shed a tear, I'm spending my Christmas with Jesus this year!" There was a card in the gift box. As I read the words, it was as if I could hear Gary saying to me the words on the card.



With tears running down my face, I could feel through the Holy Spirit the presence of my Lord giving me comfort, peace and love assuring me everything would be alright.

Gary has been gone 7 years now and during the holidays I will once again read this Christmas ornament, the words on the card and know that "it is well with my soul"! I thank my Lord and Savior and a special friend sending a Christmas gift at the right time. One day, I will be able to say "Don't shed a tear, I'm spending Christmas with Jesus this year."

## LIVING CHRISTMAS EVERYDAY

*“But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ,” Romans 13:14*

*“For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” Gal. 3:27*

Thinking of Christmas, we all have special memories that we associate with Christmas, like going to grandma’s, presents, giving and receiving, food, decorations, etc. The list would be long. Most of us all remember the birth of Jesus Christ and all that is entailed in that event. Ultimately, we realize He was God’s gift to mankind. Perhaps that is why we share gifts today.



**Jeff Leman**  
Decatur, Indiana

But what do we do the rest of the year? In Romans 13:14 and Galatians 3:27, we are instructed to “put on” Jesus Christ. The Greek word for put on is “enyo” which literally means to dress yourself. When we get dressed in the morning we dress for the occasion, maybe work, maybe a ladies’ luncheon, or maybe just around the house. We want to present ourselves correctly for the situation. If we put on Jesus Christ, it is for all that we interact with to see.

Putting on Jesus is our way of giving Jesus to the world on a daily basis and that gift of Jesus to those around us is a token of God’s gift of Jesus to the world.

## DATE NUT LOAF

**Jane Frauhiger – Bluffton, Indiana**

This is an old recipe and very good especially if you like dates and walnuts!!

### Ingredients & Instructions:

2.5 c English Walnuts - cut coarse  
2.5 c dates - cut  
4 eggs - beaten  
1 c brown sugar  
1 c wheat flour  
1 teaspoon cinnamon  
Pinch of salt  
2 teaspoon vanilla  
2 teaspoon baking powder.



- Bake at 235 degrees for 1.25 hours
- Bake in a 11 X 5” loaf pan or in an Angel Food cake tube pan
- Check with a toothpick to see if it is done.

\* \* \* \* \*

## DAY 18: HOW TO LIVE LIKE IT'S CHRISTMAS EVERY DAY



**Ron Corzine**  
**Ft. Worth, Texas**

Christmas is one of my favorite holidays. When I was very young, I remember asking my parents, “Why can’t we have Christmas every day?” Now that I’m an adult I ask myself this question. “What would celebrating Christmas everyday entail?”

I believe living like it's Christmas all year long would mean embracing the spirit of joy, kindness, and generosity that characterizes that special season of the year.

Here are just a few things I would incorporate into our daily life: I would...

1. **Practice Gratitude:** Having just celebrated Thanksgiving, continue to be thankful for what you have and focus on the positive aspects of your life.
2. **Spread Kindness:** Carry out random acts of kindness regularly, such as helping others, volunteering, or even just offering a kind word and a smile.
3. **Maintain a Giving/Generous Spirit:** Be very generous by donating your time, and especially sharing with those in need.

Remember that the key to living like it's Christmas all year long is to carry the spirit of love, joy, and giving in your heart every day, not just during the holiday season.





## DAY 19: CHRISTMAS YEAR 'ROUND

*"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name." John 1:12 NKJV*

My grandmother LOVED Christmas! Once she gave her life to Jesus in the early 1950's, she became a new creation.

I grew up seeing her house transform into a beautiful Christmas wonderland of decorations shortly after Thanksgiving, and I was only happy to help! That meant drinking hot chocolate or Mexican "champurrado," baking cookies, gathering around the piano while my mom played and led us in singing Christmas carols, participating in the Christmas pageant at church, and not to mention the parties and gifts!

But was that really what Christmas was about? Grandma would repeatedly tell me that she loved Christmas because that's when we celebrated the birth of her Savior.

Once I was older and close to adulthood, did I understand that she honored Christmas in her heart year 'round through her love for our Lord Jesus and for those He loved - the lost. She spoke of Jesus to whomever would take a few minutes to listen to her: family, friends, neighbors, and strangers (the cashiers at HEB were prime targets). She served the Lord at church until her body became weak and frail with age. Even then, she would lift up people who came to visit her in prayer. Because of this, her love for Christmas became contagious, and she passed it on to her daughters: my aunt and mom, and this granddaughter. My favorite line in Charles Dickens' novel, A Christmas Carol, comes from Ebenezer Scrooge: "I will honor Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year." She truly kept Christmas year 'round!



**Ida Ruth Rodriguez**  
Brownsville, Texas



## DAY 20: WHAT CHRISTMAS MEANS TO ME

*“Oh Lord, Great and Awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him, and with those who keep His commandments.” Daniel 9:4*



**Stan Geisel**  
Bluffton, Indiana

Christmas is that special time of year when I try to look past and put all of the commercialism out of my mind and just dwell on the “Most wonderful gift ever given to mankind”. We can celebrate that time of year even if it may not even be the actual day Christ was born by enjoying family time together and sharing His love with each other.

We went through a very difficult time some years ago as our oldest daughter Rochelle was going through much emotional turmoil and had separated herself from our family. Those were very difficult times to celebrate much of anything. But praise be to our Great God, He touched her soul and mind. After four years of many prayers from so many loving Brothers, Sisters, and friends, Rochelle came back to us healed and with a new zeal for Christ!! We then enjoyed five years as a complete family again, sharing many joyful times together. Then December 13, 2021, God decided to take Rochelle to her heavenly home. That year was a VERY difficult Christmas. But the joy we have knowing that she had returned to Christ and her Heavenly Father before she went home is the best Christmas gift next to our Savior coming to earth to redeem us.

## LOUISE GERBER'S TRUFFLES

Lori Smith - Bluffton, Indiana



### Ingredients:

4½ (20oz) real milk chocolate – finely chopped  
1/3 c. heavy cream  
1/3 c. half & half  
1 t. vanilla  
Dipping chocolate

### Instructions:

- Melt chocolate over hot water (in micro: 50% power)
- Combine cream and half & half, heat to scalding.
- Cool cream mixture to 130 degrees.
- Add to melted chocolate all at once, beating until smooth and well-blended.
- Add vanilla and blend in.
- Chill in frig till candy is firm but pliable
- Beat with mixture until candy is light and fluffy
- Return to frig until firm and form into 3/4” balls
- Immediately dip in chocolate. (4 dozen centers)

## **GO SEE LOUISE!**

*“But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you.” John 16:13-14*

The Holy Spirit kept nudging me to visit my favorite 94 yr. old friend, Louise Gerber, who was a widow.

Since Louise came to my mind, I reflected on the last time we visited a couple of weeks earlier in her room at the local nursing home in Bluffton, Indiana. When I left that day, I was so encouraged and felt so refreshed in the Lord. For you see, Louise had a way of making you feel so special and encouraged. I so dearly loved being in her presence.

Soon I stopped fondly reflecting on Louise as the words "Go see Louise!" grew stronger and stronger that late Thursday afternoon on September 7, 2023. So, I stopped what I was doing and went.

When I opened the door to her room, Louise was motionless in bed with her eyes closed. Two people were sitting beside her bed. I was clueless as to Louise's current condition. When her daughter shared that hearing is the last thing to go, I realized Louise was dying. Moving close beside Louise, I shared briefly and softly with Louise, "My precious friend you're going to be with my Jesus before me." I thanked her daughter for allowing me to spend a few minutes with my favorite Indiana friend, Louise. When I left, I was so grateful that the Holy Spirit had nudged me to go see her on that specific day and time. The Lord knew how much she meant to me, and how I treasured her friendship. I will always cherish my memories of her and the godly wisdom she shared each time we visited.

For the next early morning on Friday, September the 8th, Louise moved gently into the loving arms of Jesus into her eternal home.

We often sing that old hymn, "What A Friend We Have in Jesus," and because of our shared love, faith, and friendship with Him we became wonderful friends. That friendship continues in the spirit from a distance because I think of her so often. Joy fills my heart knowing we will be together again in the future. Until then, know that I love you Louise. I rejoice with you as you celebrate your first Christmas in heaven in the arms of Jesus.



**Myrna Brogdon**  
**Los Fresnos, TX**



**Louise Gerber**  
**Bluffton, Indiana**



## DAY 21: WHAT CHRISTMAS MEANS TO ME

*"Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!" 2 Corinthians 9:15*



**Yvette Perez**  
Rancho Viejo, Texas

In September, stores begin to showcase Christmas as a time for twinkly ornament-laden trees, stockings of red and green, and the relentless jingle-bell commercials enticing shoppers to subconsciously sing and spend money; however, the hints of the approaching holiday say nothing about what Christmas means and often leave many empty or stressed about not being able to purchase a specific gift.

Every year at midnight on Christmas Eve, my family sits down together and the story of the Nativity is read out of the book of Luke. We then sing "Happy Birthday" to Jesus with cake and candle. Some people have found this odd,

but our family believes that without Jesus having *his* birthday then we would not exist, nor would we be together as a family.

At our house, the beauty of brightly wrapped gifts under our tree suddenly pale in comparison to each one of us sharing and professing the Top 3 Blessings from God of the year. We have done this since I was a child, and now my grown son counts on this time. What humbles me most is that never has a member of our family within that circle of shared blessings, ever named the latest video game device, blingy watch or that designer leather handbag. The blessings named are far grander and encompass what humans cannot purchase or create, but only be gifted by our Father, creator of the universe. The blessings named yearly vary, but they praise Him and thank Him for salvation, good health, miraculous healing, friendship, forgiveness, deliverance and His abundant unending grace, just to name a few.

Christmas is acknowledging that nothing in life is more important than the greatest *gift-giver* who sacrificed His only Son, Jesus Christ, the *greatest gift* bestowed upon mankind. Because our Savior

Jesus Christ was born so we all may choose to have eternal life. All we have to do is acknowledge and accept Him, and the gift that puts all others to shame, is ours forever. Suddenly, "Merry Christmas" has new meaning. And each year for me, my family and I, are newly rooted in what Christmas means and to God be all the Glory!



## THE LORD WILL PROVIDE!

Back in the 1940's, just after the great depression and WWII, things were rough financially for many people, including our family of 8. I was just a young girl about the age of 10.

One Christmas when money was very tight, we even had to use blocks of white shortening for butter and mix into it a little yellow capsule to color it like butter. But we were happy and knew our parents loved us. They took us to church every Sunday. On that particular Christmas, there was not enough money for presents. We had a small artificial Christmas tree, decorated with tinsel and a few colored lights on a card table, but no gifts under it. One thing we always had was food on our table.



**Virginia Rauch  
Bluffton, Indiana**

On that one particular Christmas, our dad wanted us to have a "Merry Christmas" so he took our favorite old toys, fixed, glued and painted them to look like almost new again. Dad took my favorite doll that said, "Mama and Papa" when turned over, and repainted the **hair** and mouth on its composition body. He wrapped tape around its tummy to hold it together again. After he painted it, he hung it up on the dining room ceiling to dry. I felt sorry for my doll hanging from the ceiling, without clothes, but Dad was doing his best to fix it up for me again. He repainted my brother's metal cars and trucks. Mother made new doll dresses for my sisters and I out of old scraps of fabric. When Christmas came, we were happy to



**Virginia and her doll**

have our toys renewed and almost like new again. Our parents did their best to make do with what they had and we were happy with that. We were together as a family and were thankful and enjoyed what we did have.

In our church Hymnal, there is a song that says, THE LORD WILL PROVIDE. As the Lord provided for my family that Christmas many years ago, He can provide for you a life better than anything this world has to offer. Jesus can take our old broken lives, make them new again by giving us Salvation and the assurance of Eternal life. Even though we may have very little when it comes to earthly goods, we can have all we need by having the love of Jesus in our hearts. Then we can belong to the Family of God which is the greatest happiness of all gifts. Why not ask Him today to give you the peace that passes all understanding? THE LORD WILL PROVIDE.

## **DAY 22: A VERY SPECIAL CHRISTMAS GIFT!**

*"He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds." Psalm 147:3*



**Jan Herring  
Bluffton, Indiana**

My dad (Guy Morris) was a wonderful Christian man and I loved him very much. Unfortunately, his death occurred 70 years ago on December 2, when I was 8, almost 9 years old. He had told me I was old enough and responsible enough to have a bicycle that year, but with his death just before Christmas, a bicycle was the last thing on my mind. This was going to be my saddest and most difficult Christmas. However, when I came downstairs on Christmas morning, there in front of the Christmas tree stood a brand-new pink and white 24" Schwinn bicycle. My dad was always a man of his word and had purchased that bike for my Christmas -- but didn't live to see me get it. Although it is not quite a full-size bicycle, I rode it for many years, even as an adult. I still have it in my storage unit, although it does not look like new anymore. I cannot part with that very special bike, for it is like he left a part of himself with me. Over the years it has been used by God to provide comfort, encouragement, and precious memories.

## **AUNT MARGUERITE'S ZUCCHINI BREAD**

**Marguerite Edwards – Collinsville, Alabama**

### **Ingredients:**

3 eggs  
2 cups sugar  
1 teaspoon vanilla  
1 cup oil  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
1 teaspoon cinnamon  
3 cups flour  
1/4 teaspoon baking powder  
2 cups grated zucchini, unpeeled  
1/2 cup chopped walnuts  
Nuts to sprinkle on top of loaves

### **Instructions:**

- Beat eggs.
- Add and mix well the sugar, zucchini, and vanilla.
- Add and mix well the oil, baking soda, cinnamon, flour, baking powder, and nuts.
- Pour batter into 2 well-greased loaf pans (8 X 4).
- Bake at 325 degrees for 40 to 60 minutes, or until toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.
- Cool in pan on rack for 20 minutes.
- Remove bread from pan, and completely cool.



## **A LESSON I HAVE NEVER FORGOTTEN!**

My husband and I were married right out of college. At 22 and 23 we began our marriage with busy jobs and a quick decision to return to college for our MBA. After a few years, I thought it was time for us to start our family. I felt confident in how this worked. Most of my married friends had at least one child and some had two. When things did not progress as expected, I began to panic. I was initially disappointed, then came pity, eventually anger and even some resentment. It was not an easy time in my life and my attitude was not helpful in fostering a good marital relationship. My husband was patient with me, but he eventually realized he could not change our circumstances. So, he focused on his work. He worked and worked and worked!



**Donna Meyer**  
**Round Rock, Texas**

We sought the care of doctors who specialized in infertility cases. I pursued medicines, procedures, more medicines and finally my doctor said stop! My body was reacting negatively to all that I was doing to it, and he thought a rest was in order. At this point, I realized that my husband and I could not “make a baby” on our own. When I finally gave up and conceded that God was in charge of making babies and he alone was sovereign over my life, that is when he showed up. Only a month after I quit my medicines, I conceived. It was in December! What a blessed gift from God. He not only gave us a child, but he taught me to trust him in all things. A lesson I have never forgotten.

## **NADYNE BROGDON'S BANANA PUDDING**

**Nadyne Brogdon – Quitman, Texas**

### **Ingredients:**

2 cups milk	4 level Tablespoons flour
2 eggs	1 teaspoon vanilla flavoring
1 and 1/2 cup sugar	2 to 3 bananas
	vanilla wafers

### **Instructions:**

- Warm milk in a pan.
- In a bowl beat eggs, sugar and flour until light.
- Pour milk into mixture.
- Cook on medium heat, stirring constantly until thick.
- Add vanilla flavoring.
- In a bowl put sliced bananas and vanilla wafers and pour pudding on first layer. Continue repeating.

\* \* \* \* \*

## DAY 23: I STILL LOVE CHRISTMAS!



**Sandy Green**  
Harlingen, Texas

Even though my parents were not Christians at the time, Christmas was always a special time for we 3 kids. The typical decorations, the lights, the tree, the merriment, all were important. Living in South Texas, we only dreamed of a White Christmas. We had a cardboard put-together fireplace and mantel. No chimney! What, how could Santa get our presents to us???

One year, for some reason, we didn't have a tree, so we ended up going to the brushy area across the street and bringing in a weeping willow tree and properly decorating it.

We always knew we were loved and received the usual asked for gifts: train, basketball, and doll babies. Our stockings were always filled with nuts, oranges and ribbon candy. I think I probably had heard the real Christmas story about a manager and the wise men and a baby Jesus, but it wasn't until much later when we had our own 3 children did I discover the TRUE meaning of CHRISTMAS.

Jesus became so real to me and whether or not December 25 was his actual birth, that is not the point. He came to this earth to save ME. The redemption story is sacred to me. I met my Savior face to face one Sunday morning and from that time on, Christmas has never been the same.

I STILL love Christmas, and several years ago I was privileged to actually travel to the Holy Land and see for myself where Jesus lived and walked.

## GRACE JACKSON'S CHRISTMAS PUNCH

Grace Jackson - Harlingen, Texas

### Ingredients:

1 quart pineapple juice  
1 pkg (2 qt) lime Kool-Aid  
1 qt lime sherbet  
2 qts ginger ale

### Instructions:

Mix Kool-Aid in punch bowl. Add pineapple juice. Just before serving, add sherbet by spoonfuls. Add ginger ale. For red punch, use raspberry Kool-Aid and sherbet.



## **LET GO...LET GOD!**

*“Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.” Philippians 4:11*

Being a first born, strong-willed woman, God was about to teach me a deeper level of dependency and submission to Him.

At the age of 59, I was so devastated when my first husband, Butch Moser, passed away in 2004 from a six-week illness. I was further broken in late November 2020 when my life took another difficult turn. I fell and was in the hospital for over three weeks with no visitors, masked, and a broken femur that messed up my knee. During this time, my brother-in-law and some friends passed away from Covid complications. I was so distraught from this since I was unable to attend their funerals. My step-son encouraged me to view my hospital stay as a sanctuary that people pay big bucks for to get away. That changed my entire attitude on how I viewed my outlook and to focus more on God and others.



**Pat Bertsch  
Bluffton, Indiana**

One night, when I was awakened with excruciating pain, I saw a vision of angels completely covering the sky in white and an archangel at the head, with two swords drawn. I know angels are God’s messengers ready to come and minister to us at God’s command. As I cried out in the name of Jesus pondering as to what I was seeing, I knew I was having an enormous battle and needed to stand firm in the Lord. Immediately my pain left as fast as it came. I praised God. I hadn’t thought much about the vision until late 2023 and realized that we are in a spiritual battle/warfare for the souls of men. Just look at what is happening in the world today. We are to trust God and depend on Him, as He sends His angels to do battle for us, bringing comfort and leading us through difficult times.

I returned home right before Christmas to a peaceful home decorated by my sweet, second husband that I married in 2006. We were so thankful to be at home together again. Things I was always involved in, either stopped or changed during Covid and my many months of healing and having to depend on others. God was teaching me to “Let Go...” That Christmas was so serene and simple. I am learning to “abide” and find contentment in whatever state I am in. The Holy Spirit became more real to me as my constant companion. I am forever being changed and refined by fire and am grateful that God took a truly broken woman as I was and He carried me through all those storms. I know that He will continue to do so as I walk with Jesus. Great is His Faithfulness (Lamentations 3:22-23).



## DAY 24: WHAT CHRISTMAS MEANS TO ME



**Rebecca Rodriguez  
Harlingen, Texas**

Christmas is a day we get to spend time with our family and friends. You get to cook your favorite meal and share with your family, giving gifts and sometimes play games with them. It's a fun day to celebrate a special day with everyone. Sometimes you get to visit family who is living away from you. I think for me that's very exciting to see them, sharing stories and cooking with them. It's also a time to relax and recharge after a busy work week and get refreshed as well.

Christmas also is time to share your blessings to the less fortunate families, kids, and grandparents who are living in a nursing home. They are lonely

and when they see family coming to bring gifts for them, it gives them happiness.

Decorating the tree with different colors of ornaments and lights makes you feel relaxed and happy. The most important thing on Christmas we have to remember is not about those beautiful decorations, the food and desserts, but it's about Jesus Christ who died on the cross for all of us. To me that's the magical event that happened in our lives because God sent His only Son to save and reconcile us to Him.

This is the most fabulous gift that we have ever received "Jesus". Remembering what He did for us gives me a great satisfaction; it shows His unending love to all of us that He left His throne to save us.

As you celebrate this day, I encourage you to meditate on what the Lord has done for you. Take time to share about Him with your family and if they don't know Christ it is the perfect opportunity to share His love for us.

By sharing His love for us to other people indicates He is the best gift given to everyone. This is a free gift. All we have to do is accept Him and receive Christ our Savior.





## **LIVING CHRISTMAS 365 DAYS OF THE YEAR**

*“But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship.”  
Galatians 4:4-5*

Have you noticed that on the commercial side of things Christmas comes earlier and earlier every year? Lights go up earlier, trees get decorated earlier and stores start selling earlier. It wouldn't surprise me if one of these days we don't see Christmas as a business 365 days of the year! There are people who during the year will gradually buy gifts so that it is all ready when December comes. But the meaning of Christmas is not the decorations, or the gift giving, or the meals that are shared. The meaning of Christmas is found in the baby Jesus born in Bethlehem.



**Dr. Joe Powell  
Pryor, Oklahoma**

For Christmas, we have always had a Nativity scene. It reminds us of how in the fullness of time, when everything was just right, when God said it is time, He sent forth His Son born of a virgin to become the Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace, Messiah, Savior, the Lamb of God “Who purchased people for God with His blood from every tribe, language, people, and nation” (Revelation 5:9).

During our 58 years of marriage, traveling to a number of countries as International Missionaries, Norma and I have purchased many nativity scenes. A few years ago, she decided that we needed cabinets to display our 120 nativities, so we purchased two cabinets and put them on display 365 days of the year.

At our house the nativities remind us that Jesus came to love people of all tribes, languages and nations, and that we are to live Christmas 365 days of the year. Jesus is not to be received as God's grace gift and then to be put away like we do the Christmas ornaments. He lives and He lives in us every day. We are to worship Him every day. We are to shine for Him every day. We are to become more like Him every day.

This is why Jesus came as a baby, born of a virgin, grew as a man, suffered, was crucified, and resurrected. He was God incarnate, who gave up His glory in Heaven, to become like us, so that we could become like Him (Romans 8:29) and live for Him 365 days of the year.

\* \* \* \* \*

## DAY 25: WHAT CHRISTMAS MEANS TO ME

*"She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." Matthew 1:21*



**Dr. Marva O'Neal**  
Richmond, Texas

Many of my fondest childhood memories occurred during the Christmas season. I love everything about Christmas and look forward to decorating the tree, eating all my favorite calorie laden holiday treats, singing carols, attending holiday gatherings, watching holiday themed Hallmark movies, and reliving time-honored traditions with family and friends. I inherited my love of Christmas from my father, William Wrench. My dad adored all the "worldly" holiday traditions and was responsible for ensuring that each holiday season was magical. I would often get caught up in the magic of the holidays (as many children do); however, my father never allowed me to lose sight of the true meaning of

Christmas... the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Christmas is a time for believers to focus on the birth of Jesus and to reflect and rejoice in knowing that because of His birth, death, and resurrection we are forgiven of our sins and have been granted the gift of eternal life. As I look forward to commemorating another glorious Christmas season with friends and family, I plan on spending some time reflecting on the best gift that I have ever been given, a relationship with Christ.

## SHOWING THE LOVE OF CHRIST

*"Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth."*  
1 John 3:18



**John Cavazos**  
Brownsville, Texas

In 2012, I was a principal of a charter school in a small town. We had an enrollment of approximately 130 students that attended regularly. The school was composed of at-risk students, who were one or two grade levels behind and we had about twenty-five teen mothers. That Christmas season, we were fortunate that a local business woman called and said she had infant/children pajamas (brand new) that had been donated from a well-known clothing maker. Of course, I said yes and was able to acquire two pajama sets per child. The teachers got together and the pajama sets were gift wrapped along with a stuffed animal. We hosted a small program for our young teen moms with cookies, punch, and a surprise visit by Santa Claus! The young mothers were thrilled that someone cared enough to show the love of Christ to them and treat them as family.

## WHAT DOES CHRISTMAS MEAN TO ME?

When I celebrate Christmas, I celebrate the fact that Jesus provided a way for all of us, including me, to connect with God, our Heavenly Father. *“Jesus answered, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’” (John 14:6)* He IS the only way to all truth and life, definitely worth celebrating!

As I prepare for Christmas Day, I like to reflect for a moment on my own priorities.

Because my husband and I have received the gift of salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior, our first priority should be cultivating a deeper relationship with our Father. We draw nearer to God by spending time with Him in His Word, prayer, thanksgiving, worship, and praise. As the New Year approaches, we want to be ready in season and out to give an account of the hope that is in us to all who might ask.

Christmas is a time for joyful celebration! We love to invite others to join in our joy-filled celebration. In Guatemala, we baked pineapple-cinnamon rolls and passed them out to others along with the accompanying tract about Jesus, the “Bread of Life.” While in China, we invited our sons to make homemade decorations and goodies so we could share the true meaning of Christmas with our university students. During the H.O.P.E. Stroke Support Group’s Annual Christmas Party at Valley Baptist Medical Center in Harlingen, Texas, we celebrated Christmas with stroke survivors and their caregivers while targeting specific groups who would receive donated gifts, toys, and cookies.

Christmas is a time of simply sharing with others what’s most important in our lives. May I ask? How important is God’s Greatest Gift to you? If you don’t know God or how much He loves you and desires to be with you now and throughout eternity, may I encourage you to seek Him as you would a lost treasure. If you’ve never asked Jesus to forgive you of your sins, acknowledging that He died on the cross so that your sins would no longer be a barrier between you and God, this Christmas you can invite Him to have first place in your life. If you’re slightly hesitant, then perhaps your greatest priority this Christmas and throughout the New Year, would be to seek Him, to know Him personally, intimately, to ask Him to be your Lord and Savior.

Jesus is the GREATEST GIFT you could ever receive. God is reaching out to you today with His Son, Jesus. I encourage you to receive God’s gift of ETERNAL LIFE through His Son, JESUS!



**Debbie Diehl**  
**Harlingen, Texas**

## DAY 26: JESUS IS OUR ROCK

*"From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I." Psalm 61:2*



**Lois Drayer**  
**Bluffton, Indiana**

Our grandson, Garek, passed away unexpectedly two days after Thanksgiving, 2022. We were so overwhelmed at the time and knew that Christmas would be a somber time, especially for Garek's parents, Brian and Shannon.

We gathered on Christmas eve, 2022, with our sons and their wives and our many grandchildren. Each grandchild had their own name-embroidered stocking hung, which we did every Christmas. Amid tears and gifts and even laughter as we recalled funny moments with Garek and our family, we celebrated the true meaning of Christmas-when Jesus came to earth

as a tiny baby and became the Rock of our salvation.

That Christmas eve, everyone was given several notecards and all present wrote or drew a specific memory of Garek on each card. We placed all the cards in Garek's stocking and gave the stocking to his parents with the thought: When the "what-if's" and "if-only" thoughts come and the tears flow, Brian and Shannon can read the cards and remember that although Garek's time on earth was short, he was loved. And so very much loved by a merciful, faithful, and loving God. We cling to the fact that Jesus is our Rock and His will is perfect.

## CHRISTMAS TREE COOKIES

Leigh Aten – Brownsville, Texas

### Ingredients:

1 2/3 c sifted AP flour  
1/2 tsp salt  
1/2 c butter  
1/2 c sugar  
1 egg  
1/2 tsp Vanilla  
1/2 tsp almond extract  
Green food coloring to desired color

### Icing:

2 c powdered sugar  
Milk as needed  
1/8 tsp butter flavor  
1/8 tsp vanilla  
Mix together until smooth and thin enough to drizzle.

### Instructions:

Sift flour and salt together. Cream butter and sugar. Blend in egg, vanilla, almond extract and green food coloring. Beat well. Add the dry ingredients gradually. Mix thoroughly. Press dough through a cookie press with tree design onto ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 400° for 8-10 minutes. Cool. Drizzle with icing and green sugar.



## DAY 27: CHRISTMAS BLESSING

*“Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’ “The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’” Matthew 25:37-40*

One Christmas season, we were in charge of the Help’s Ministry at our church. One of our ushers would frequently go to Mexico to have a service in a very poor community called El Ejido de la Puerta. He had asked the children of the Ejido to write letters asking for what they wanted for Christmas. He was overwhelmed by their letters and knew there was no way he could fulfill their wishes. He approached John and I to see if we could help. We decided to take those letters and do our very best to help.



**John and Mary Cavazos  
Brownsville, Texas**

We decided that we would not gift each other. We spoke to our children and told them that they would get less gifts, because we were going to help these children. God led us miraculously. We approached some of our friends at church. They were more than willing to help out.

We went to a shoe store downtown and the salesperson helped us translate the Spanish sizes to US sizes. She even donated some shoes for us to take.

It was heartbreaking and heartwarming all at the same time, because the kids were asking for things that were practical, or things for their younger siblings.

We joined the team that went to the Ejido to have a service and deliver the gifts. It was so beautiful to see how such poor people brought whatever little they had to make a feast for us all. This was the best Christmas ever!!!

## GRACE JACKSON’S SNOWBALL COOKIES

**Grace Jackson - Harlingen, Texas**

### Ingredients:

- 1 cup butter (cream well)
- 3 tablespoons powdered sugar
- 2 cups flour
- 1 cup pecans (chopped fine)
- ½ teaspoon vanilla
- ½ teaspoon lemon juice



### Instructions:

Cream butter well and then add ingredients, mixing well. Roll with floured hands into 1 ½” balls. Bake on ungreased cookie sheet @ 275 degrees for approx.45 min. When cool, roll in white powder sugar.

## **DAY 28: MY LAST CHRISTMAS!**

*“Our time on earth is brief; the number of our days is already decided by you.”  
Job 14:5*



**Myrna Brogdon**  
**Los Fresnos, Texas**

It was Oct. 1998 and I had a small stroke. The neurologist ran tests and said, “You have Microvascular Ischemic Disease, a hardening of the small vessels in the brain. It’s all over your brain and in two months, you’ll have a massive stroke, be dead or a vegetable and demented.”

Even though Gayle and I both heard that terrible, negative report, the gravity of it didn’t sink in with us at that moment. So, how did Gayle and I respond? He laughed while sharing a one-liner, “I always knew, Myrna, you were a hardhead.” And I laughed at his quick wit, but the doctor with wide eyes looked stunned.

When we returned home from the Mayo Clinic, it hit us to the severity of my condition. I became depressed. Sadly, I thought Christmas is only two months away and it’ll be my last Christmas. I must make it the BEST Christmas ever for my family -- one they’ll always remember! But how? Then I knew exactly what to do. First, I praised and worshipped the Lord and the depression lifted as God inhabited my praises (Psalm 22:3)!

Next, with great excitement and Gayle’s permission, I flew to Dallas, Texas and went to Neiman Marcus to buy affordable Christmas gifts at this very expensive store. Wide-eyed at everything and the out of sight price tags, I managed to buy small gifts without leaving Gayle a huge credit card debt after I passed away.

Then Christmas came and the family listened intently as to why they were having a Neiman Marcus Christmas. Several months later, I was still alive but worrying how soon I would die. As a result of focusing on such negativity again, my emotions quickly spiraled downward. I cried out to the Lord. God heard and it felt like He was telling me how to live each day:

- Don’t focus on what you don’t have.
- Focus on what you do have...I have today!
- Focus on what you can have... God’s healing promises!

So, I did. With the Lord’s grace, mercy, love, and strength, I focused on the Lord each day—loving God and others while living out “I have today!” Then in 2002, a neurologist took another MRI and compared it to the last one, stating the disease had stopped progressing. We praised God for helping me live and not die, but to declare the works of the Lord! My last Christmas is still pending!

## PEACE BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

I'm not really sure how we came to celebrate Christmas on a single day or for that matter, for a single season. The very essence of our Christian faith is that the love of our Heavenly Father is "fresh and new every new day" (see Lamentations 3:22-23). So, it makes sense that Christmas should be evident each and every day of our lives. We may not give gifts year-round (although I could make a case for that), but we can, and should, *experience* His love (Romans 5:5), His peace (Colossians 3:15), and His hope (Romans 8:24-25) throughout the year!



**Steve Hale**  
**Brazoria, Texas**

We hear a lot during this time of year about the spirit of Christmas. But I recently read a statement that said "*the spirit of Christmas should be superseded by the Spirit of Christ*". Wow! Read that again.

A casual reader might think these are one in the same. The spirit of Christmas may produce a break in our routine from the hustle and bustle of our lives, or even the cessation of hostilities as in times of war. But it does little to inspire lasting change. It is only the Spirit of Christ that can produce peace that this world craves.

Luke 2:13-14 says, "*And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men*".

This is often interpreted as "peace among men". But actually, the angels were praising God for "peace between" God and man. What an incredible revelation to understand that the announcement of the birth of Jesus was God's declaration of the end of His war on sin and the unveiling of His grander plan to live in peace among man. His wrath would now be satisfied and it would now be possible for Christ to be born in the hearts of man through the Holy Spirit. Reconciliation and fellowship would be His gift to humanity.

And what an incredible gift it has been! It is truly the gift that continues to give.... all day, every day, 365 days of the year! THAT is what makes this the most wonderful time of the year!

\* \* \* \* \*

## DAY 29: WHAT CHRISTMAS MEANS

*“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” John 1:1, 14*



**Dan Rodriguez  
Harlingen, Texas**

Christmas means many things to many people but often it's our own personal take on its meaning.

Many years ago, someone said to me, “Things aren't what they 'seem' to be. Things are what they are.

The truth being communicated is that reality isn't subject to anyone's opinions or take on it. It is what it is. And so, it is with Christmas. God has defined for us what that first Christmas morn means.

Christmas means that God has intervened in this fallen, sinful world's woes. Christmas means God cares about our fallen state and has ordained the solution. It means that the cry of humanity's suffering has been heard and answered. Christmas means no one could remedy yours and my hopeless condition of being bound by sin's tyrannical grip but God Himself.

So, God did not send an angel that first Christmas morn but His only-begotten Son, Jesus, the Christ: the Lord of the angels. He ordained that He would pay the sin debt-owed eternal judgment by a holy God-and bring forgiveness and peace to lost humanity.

Christmas means the Savior has come into our suffering to bear what we could never bear ourselves and to pay the debt He did not owe for those who owed but could not pay.

Christmas means many things to many people but the reality is what it is, and nothing can change the reality that God came into this world taking on human flesh to bear the sins of His people (Matt. 1:21).

Christmas means you can have peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ if you will repent of your sins and believe the good news of Christ: dead, buried and risen from the dead to save those who put their whole trust in Him alone for salvation.

May you, by faith, be the recipient of the greatest Gift this Christmas: Jesus Christ. And may the reality of Christmas joy be yours this Christmas season because of Christ.

\* \* \* \* \*



## **MAYBE YOU'RE HURTING . . .**

*"He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds." Psalm 147:3*

Holidays, especially Christmas, are sometimes a difficult time for many who have lost family, friends and dearly loved ones.

Many times, by singing songs and hymns to the Lord, it can draw us into His presence and we can find comfort and peace from Him. Therefore, while my mother was in the hospital bed and she knew she would soon pass away, she asked her sister, Irene, and me to sing her favorite hymn, "How Great Thou Art". Even though that was extremely difficult, we sang with tears flowing as she tried to mouth the words. My mother's face shone and the comfort it brought her was obvious.



**Myrna Brogdon  
Los Fresnos, Texas**

After her passing and during my times of grief, especially Christmas, I'd focus many times on that precious memory of us singing "How Great Thou Art." And the heaviness would lift as I sang praises to the Lord for who He is and all He's done.

"O Lord my God, When I in awesome wonder,  
Consider all the worlds Thy Hands have made;  
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,  
Thy power throughout the universe displayed.

Then sings my soul, My Savior God, to Thee,  
How great Thou art, How great Thou art.  
Then sings my soul, My Savior God, to Thee,  
How great Thou art, How great Thou art!"

Not only did that help me, but talking with Jesus Christ was my mainstay in receiving the comfort I needed.

Since the Lord gives comfort to those hurting and heals the brokenhearted, maybe you'd like to pray something like this:

"Jesus, heal my broken heart. Hold me in Your embrace, Father. Wrap me in Your love. Please fill me with the peace that goes beyond understanding, with joy that only can come from You. Walk closely with me on my journey to healing and recovery. I believe my healing is possible through Your power alone. In Jesus name I pray. Amen."



HE  
Heals  
THE  
Broken  
HEARTED

## DAY 30: GOD'S CHRISTMAS PAGEANT



**Betty Thompson**  
Plainview, Texas

It was fall of 1999, my husband had retired from the Navy and we were moving from Texas to Florida. As we traveled over the miles, my heart was filled with excited anticipation about our future. I was also praising and thanking God for the blessing of our new home. During that time of thankfulness, I felt that God was impressing me to use our home to bless HIM. Then He began to unfold a plan for a Christmas pageant with our grandchildren.

I kept this in my heart and did not share it with my husband until late November. I told him that I had felt impressed by God to do this and asked him if it would be okay. He thought it was a good idea but since his children were not “into religion” he was quite reluctant and expressed his concern that they might not be “open” to doing this. Also, he didn’t want them to be offended nor for me to be hurt if they declined. However, he gave his permission for me to ask but with the warning that I should be prepared to accept their refusal.

His cautious remarks did cause me some concern since I was a stepmother and having lived at a distance for some years, we still had relationships to build. Nevertheless, I could **not** ignore the strong impression that I knew was from God.

So, with my husband’s approval, and with fear and trembling, I began. I constructed a note of explanation and a request for their participation. I started with the oldest one who was 15 at that time and Bob’s first and dearly loved granddaughter. I feared she might be the one most likely to decline, also felt that if she agreed, then most likely the younger ones would follow. I sent the invitation and quickly she responded YES. She was to be the angel announcing Christ birth. Then I asked the next two oldest grandsons who were 12 and 11 to be shepherds, they accepted. Next, was Joseph and Mary who were both six years old, they were excited! By Christmas time, I had assembled an angel costume, two shepherd costumes, a traveling cloak for Joseph, and a lovely blue gown for Mary. I was to be the narrator and the script was all from the scripture. The only speaking parts were given to the oldest grandchild, the angel, and the two shepherds. Since we were doing this Christmas Eve, we sent the parents away and had a little rehearsal. When I read the narrative which stated that Mary was a virgin, six-year-old Joseph spoke up and asked “What’s a virgin?” My immediate thought was “oh dear, I’ve really done it now!” Without missing a beat, Mary quickly supplied her church-learned answer and said “It means we aren’t married yet!” God provided the answer!

Finally, it was time for the parents to return and watch the pageant. The angel looked angelic as she said the words, “Don’t be afraid! Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy. For this day there is born a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.” The shepherds displayed great wonder when they said in unison “Let us go to Bethlehem and see what has happened!” During his dream, young Joseph “wrestled” so much that the pillow case came right off his pillow. When the narrative stated “And he brought forth her firstborn Son, and laid Him in a manger” beautiful Mary did just that! Having hidden him in the folds of her gown, she “brought forth the baby” and gently laid Him in the little wooden crate, just as planned. The pageant ended with these words: “Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!”

The pageant was a wonderful success! That was the first year and it became a tradition. We repeated it many years and even added three kings. That first year was a challenge of obedience. But because of my strong impression from the Lord, I knew it was His will. Not until years later when I overheard one of our sons proudly sharing with a friend about our family tradition, did I completely realize how God had used it. Since that first pageant, four adult children and seven grandchildren have experienced saving belief in Jesus Christ and been baptized. All glory to God!

## **SWEET TRASH**

**Myrna Brogdon - Los Fresnos, Texas**

### **Ingredients:**

- 1 box each of Chex cereal: wheat, rice, corn
- 2 boxes Cheerios
- 2 bags small pretzels
- 2 large containers mixed nuts
- 5 large blocks or pkgs of white chocolate wafers or almond bark



### **Instructions:**

- Pour Corn Chex, Cheerios, small pretzels, & nuts into new garbage bag. Shake bag.
- Spread out mixture onto foil lined cookie sheets; drizzle melted white chocolate over it.
- Stir chocolate into mixture, add on top (optional) green and red MM’s. The picture doesn’t have the MM’s.
- Let mixture harden approximately 2 hrs.
- After hard, break apart.
- It makes about 5-gallon size zip lock bags.
- To give as Christmas gifts, put in Christmas tins or Christmas bags.

\* \* \* \* \*



## DAY 31: SHARING THE GOOD NEWS



**Bonnie Brynteson**  
Warroad, Minnesota

I came to Christ when I was around 10 years old. When I was a teenager, I was quite bashful and didn't have the courage to talk sometimes about my relationship with Jesus.

So, I got the idea of writing my testimony out on a piece of paper. Then, I handed it to people I felt God wanted me to give my testimony to. So, I have written several of these papers and one cold wintery evening I had an interesting experience.

I lived in Duluth, Minnesota at that time several miles from the church. So, I had to get a bus from West Duluth to go home. It was snowing and the cold wind was blowing. I was standing on a dark corner all by myself waiting for the bus to come. It seemed like it was never going to come, but then this car pulled up in front of me and a gentleman asked me if I needed a ride. I was cold so I said yes not thinking something could go wrong.

He looked like a very nice man and as we were driving, he started to tell me how he had had the opportunity to sing in front of the Queen of England. He was an opera singer so he began to sing. It was quite beautiful.

I gave him the direction to where I lived way up in Piedmont Heights. He brought me right to my house and the Spirit of God said, "Give him one of your homemade tracks."

So, with a prayer in my heart, I gave him my little note and thanked him for bringing me safely home. He drove off and of course, I have no idea really who he was but I believe he read my testimony and God spoke to his heart. I hope to see him again someday.





## **DO YOU WANT JESUS CHRIST TO BE YOUR SAVIOR AND LORD?**

*“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16 ESV*

Here is a simple prayer to earnestly pray from your heart if you have not yet given your life to Jesus Christ and want to invite Him into yours:

I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God. I believe that He died for my sins and that You, God raised Him to life. I repent of my sins and ask forgiveness. I choose now to turn from my sins and every part of my life that does not please You. I give myself to You. I want to trust Jesus Christ as my Savior and follow Him as Lord, from this day forward. Guide my life and help me to do Your will. Come reign in my heart, fill me with Your love and Your life, and help me to become a person who is truly loving—a person like You. Live in me and love through me. The Bible says if I confess with my mouth that “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in my heart that God raised Him from the dead, I will be saved (Rom. 10:9). I believe with my heart and I confess with my mouth that Jesus is the Lord and Savior of my life. Thank You, God. In Jesus name. Amen.

If you have prayed this prayer in earnest, you can also know that the angels in heaven are rejoicing because of your commitment to follow Christ. May God Bless You.

*“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from you; it is the gift of God; it is not from works, so no one may boast.” Ephesians 2:8-9*



\* \* \* \* \*

## THANK YOU!

*“As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.”*

*Proverbs 27:17*

Above all, words can never fully express our heart full of love and gratitude towards You, Jesus Christ, for Who You are, what You’ve done for and are doing in and through ordinary people **ALL** for Your Honor and Glory!

We thank each of the Christians who shared in **Book 6: GOD STORIES And More...Living Christmas Daily** encouraging messages, Christmas recipes, and their personal stories of what the Lord Jesus Christ did in, through and for them.

Thank you for reading **Book 6: GOD STORIES And More...Living Christmas Daily**. If you have been touched by the Lord through this booklet, please take a few minutes and share with us at [life4educators@aol.com](mailto:life4educators@aol.com).

With Christ’s love,

*Gayle & Myrna*

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We want to say a **BIG THANK YOU** in advance for you becoming partners with us in this gospel outreach endeavor!

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## LIVING CHRISTMAS DAILY

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Christmas is more than a day at the end of the year,  
More than a season of joy and good cheer,  
Christmas is really God's pattern for living  
To be followed all year by unselfish giving...

For the holiday season awakens good cheer  
And draws us closer to those we hold dear,  
And we open our hearts and find it is good  
To live among men as we always should...

But as soon as the tinsel is stripped from the tree  
The spirit of Christmas fades silently  
Into the background of daily routine  
And is lost in the whirl of life's busy scene,

And all unawares, we miss and forego  
The greatest blessing that mankind can know...  
For if living Christmas daily, as we should,  
And making it our aim to always do good,

We'd find the lost key to meaningful living  
That comes not from getting, but from unselfish giving...  
And we'd know the great joy of peace upon earth  
Which was the real purpose of our Savior's birth,

For in the glad tidings of the first Christmas night,  
God showed us the Way and the Truth and the Light!



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