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**Christmas**

**By Joyce C. Lock**

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If the Lord's return is a bit different than we thought (flying out of here in the literal isn't exactly what He meant) we would be ashamed for Him to return at Christmas; seeing us celebrate His birth the same way pagans do. Christmas would/should never be the same again.

When we consider giving gifts of love, do we think of pretty packages to go under the tree or do we consider what Jesus would give; things like sharing the gift of salvation, meeting a need of the heart, reaching lost sheep? And, didn't He say that there would always be poor among us?

So, if it is Jesus' birth we're celebrating, shouldn't our gifts be to Jesus or on behalf of Jesus? If such a needed gift would come in a package, so be it. But, with Jesus present, there would never be a Christmas gathering to show off `our' service.

Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;  
But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:  
1 Peter 1:18-19

It was God who first showed me how He felt about the way we celebrate Christmas when I attended a church Christmas program wherein Santa was welcomed, but there was no mention of Jesus. My stomach ached and churned, and, soon, I thought I was going to puke ... feeling literally ill from head to toe.

Symptoms subsided as soon as I got out of that building. But, the memory has never left. And, for whatever other medical explanation there could be, I `knew' it was God, as He was showing me the program the way He saw it.

After hearing every possibly viable explanation there is as to why it is acceptable to lie to children about Santa Claus, God led me to the dictionary. Webster's New World Dictionary says, "Nick (nik), n. the Devil: usually Old Nick," as well as others referring to goblin and demon.

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For those who don't credit 'Santa Claus', did our Christmases ever really change or was it just the names we call him?

However God leads you to spend your Christmas is certainly between you and Him. Though, inviting Jesus to His own party would be a good place to start.

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In addition to being a published author and poet, Joyce C. Lock created the religion column, "Christianity Made Simple" for Peru Daily Tribune, continues to write inspirational articles for area newspapers, and shares further in online and e-mail ministries.

### **What Do You Want This Year?**

**By Angie Dixon**

Christmas is all around us, and many people are making up wish lists. Those who aren't doing that are busy setting down their New Year's Resolutions already. But this is a good time to sit down and do some serious introspection.

What do you want from the holidays this year? Do you want to rush around, spend a lot of money you don't have, and yell at the kids for not playing with all twenty of the toys they asked for—at the same time? Is that really how you want to spend Christmas?

We talk about "Christmas spirit," and mostly we mean giving. Giving of ourselves, giving to people who need it. That's great, that's Christmas spirit.

But I think there's another aspect to "Christmas spirit." I think it's spiritual. And don't close your screen on me because I said spiritual. I didn't say religious, because it's not. I think it comes from our souls.

I think deep down, each of us has a spirit that wants to be expressed. And I think at Christmas, when we're naturally thinking of others, that spirit is more easily expressed. I think if you want to, you can have a spiritual Christmas. You can feel loving, caring, generous. You can feel like a kid at Christmas, just by opening up to your spirit.

So what do you want this year?

Angie Dixon helps small business owners get their acts together. She is a personal development coach specializing in helping people integrate their home and work lives so they feel less stretched and more balanced. Get her FREE EBOOK on balance at

## Christmas

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to discover how coaching can change your life, contact Angie at

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What Do You Want This Year?

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