

When Your Quest for a Perfect Holiday Season Drives You Mad

It was my 10th Christmas away from home.

I had always been very strong about celebrating Christmas away from everything that was familiar, even the year I spent Christmas in Bosnia, where the only sign of Christmas was a shopping center in town.

Christmas was always a huge deal at our house.

My dad would spend days putting lights on the house and decorations all over the yard. People would slowly drive by our house to take it all in.

My mom would spend weeks in the kitchen baking cookies and making candy.

We had a special “tree tradition”; and even though every year my dad would solemnly tell us that gifts would be sparse this year because our budget was smaller, there always seemed to be a truckload of gifts under the tree.

It all spelled the perfect Christmas for me.

And I’d spent the past 10 years trying to recreate it.

But my husband’s idea of Christmas is so very different from mine. To him it was food, to me it was atmosphere and tradition. Food was only one part of it for me and he didn’t understand my love of tradition ... or even why my traditions were so important.

It made for some very tense holidays the first six years of our marriage.

Join us in quieting our hearts for the holidays!

I spent all of 2014 preparing my heart to lay down my idea of a perfect Christmas.

You see, I'd work myself into a frenzy trying to make it all perfect as a way of insulating my heart from disappointment. Somehow I'd tricked my heart into believing that no one should have a Christmas that didn't live up to their ideals, and so in an effort to control anything that could go wrong, I turned into a crazy person around December 1st. Somewhere around 8 p.m. December 25th the adrenaline would wear off and I'd have that feeling of being let down.

But I was determined that Christmas 2014 would be different.

The decorations didn't go up December 1st. I only made a few kinds of goodies – trimming my Christmas baking list way back.

But most of all, I released all of my expectations.

And something wonderful happened, I had the best Christmas I'd had in years!! It truly was perfect, because there wasn't an ideal to live up to.

The perfect Christmas isn't about atmosphere, it's about attitude.

I learned something that year.

A perfect Christmas isn't atmosphere and tradition, it is a quiet heart that is centered on Christ and filled with family.

This year Darlene from *Time Warp Wife* is leading us in a special Christmas study starting November 22nd called *Quieting Your Heart for the Holidays*.

The study will be on her blog, where you can find a free study guide.

You can also find this wonderful 30-Day Prayer journal.

Just look at this! It has the sweetest graphics in it, places

to fill in for reflection and prayer, and to record a memory of the day. Plus at the back it has Christmas preparation and shopping lists.

I can't tell you how much I love it!!

Get *Quieting Your Heart for the Holidays* here!

Join us on Sunday as we begin to prepare our hearts to quiet down for the holidays so they are free from those expectations that so often let us down, so we can be free to just enjoy Christ and our families to fullest.

Rosilind Jukic, a Pacific Northwest native, is a missionary living in Croatia and married to her Bosnian hero. Together they live with their two active boys where she enjoys fruity candles, good coffee and a hot cup of herbal tea on a blustery fall evening. Her passion for writing led her to author her best-selling book *The Missional Handbook*. At *A Little R & R* she encourages women to find contentment in what God created them to be. You can also find her at *Missional Call* where she shares her passion for local and global missions. She can also be found at on a regular basis. You can follow her on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Google +.