

Celebrate Jesus by Capturing the True Spirit of Christmas

I stood back and gazed at our work—this year’s Christmas decorations gracing our condo living room. “Looks like Christmas!” I declared to my husband, Terry. He was my partner in assembling the small tree adorned with white lights and tinsel, the silk balsam wreaths with plaid bows and the tiny crèche that lined our fireplace mantel.

Terry grinned, admitting, “Looks like the men’s shirt department at Christmas to me!”

Only two days ago we had been out shopping for decorations that would capture Christmas. The decorations from the men’s shirt department in our favorite store at the mall had somehow grabbed our attention, so of course that became our model.

Terry was right. In our efforts to capture Christmas from what we’d seen at the mall, we had succeeded only in capturing the men’s shirt department! The only thing missing were 12 dozen shirts!

Where was Christmas? Why hadn’t we captured it? That night we prayed, “Lord, show us how to capture Christmas in our home.” It was a simple prayer, but we earnestly wanted to know!

The next morning was Saturday, our day to sleep in. We were rudely awakened by the ringing of our phone. Little did we know that this would lead to the answer to our prayer from the night before.

It was Eleanor, a widow who lived in the apartment across the way. “Can you stop by with two cups of sugar? I ran out and cannot leave the place because I am baking.”

As I reached Eleanor’s condo, I noticed that her door was

ajar. Through the crack I saw people moving about! *What was this?* Eleanor often kept to herself. Some people I recognized from our building, while others I recognized as her niece and brother and sister-in-law. But some were outright strangers—men and women of all ages.

From where I stood in the doorway, I could hear the clinking of china cups. The smell of rich, dark coffee wafted through the door crack and hit my nostrils. Soon my mouth was watering. The aroma of cinnamon candles burning and bread baking filled me with a warm, tingly comfort.

Eleanor met me in her entryway. With a backdrop of lively chattering people and upbeat Christmas music, Eleanor wiped her hands on her red plaid apron and announced to me, “Welcome! Come one, come all!” *Whoa! Had Eleanor turned party animal?*

Once inside her tiny kitchen, I learned that for years Eleanor and her late husband, Henry, had opened their home each Saturday in December up through Christmas Eve to neighbors and relatives, and invited strangers from the assisted-living homes and shelters—their way of celebrating Jesus’ birthday. Eleanor was committed to continuing the tradition.

Since that day, I have come to understand the way to capture Christmas in our home. It begins with The Way, Himself, our celebrating Him first in our hearts (see John 14:6). The decorations will follow.

This Christmas, you are invited to join Terry and me in the celebration of Jesus’ birthday. Break out the balsam and the wreaths and whatever is festive. Celebrate alone, with another or with a group. But be sure to celebrate Jesus and His birth in your hearts. You can’t help but capture Christmas in your home as a result!

Do it, making merry in honor of Jesus—the real light of the world (see John 8:12). After all, He is the One who has cut

through the depths of darkness, bringing us hope for all eternity.

Happy birthday, Jesus! Joy to the world and Merry Christmas to you, in Him!

Thank the Lord that through Him, especially in this season of celebrating His birth, that all heaven and earth rejoice.

PRAYER POWER FOR THE WEEK OF 12/24/2012

Celebrate Christ in your heart this week and take some quiet time to praise and worship Him. As the year winds down, reflect on what has been and thank the Lord for His great faithfulness in the midst of it. Remember those who have suffered losses through natural disasters, war, crime, financial provision or broken relationships. Ask God what you can do to bless them in His Name. Continue to pray for Israel and our troops, as well as President Obama and those working with him to overcome the nation's challenges. John 8:12; 1 Tim. 2:1-4

To enrich your prayer life and learn how to strategically pray with power by using appropriate Scriptures, we recommend the following sources by Apostle John Eckhardt: Prayers that Rout Demons, Prayers that Bring Healing, Prayers that Release Heaven on Earth and Prayers that Break Curses. To order any or all of these click here.