

Five steps for getting through the Christmas season

Most people live lives crowded with obligations, responsibilities and demands, none of which are eliminated in December to make way for Christmas. Thus we have our usual busy month of December with Christmas added on top. An already hectic life becomes chaotic. What should be a season of great joy and peace becomes a frenetic, frustrating and exhausting time.

Here are five simple steps one can take to make Christmas everything you want it to be.

PACE YOURSELF

Consciously regulate your movements. Take charge of yourself and your time. Determine what you can do. Then stay within those boundaries. Learn the pace that is best for you, and hold the course.

ABSORB THE MOMENT

Be aware of every moment of this beautiful season. The lights, colors, music, warmth and spirit of this most loving time of the year are magnificent and worth your attention. Absorb each moment as it happens. Doing this will help you with your pacing.

PRACTICE KINDNESS

Adopt a policy of unusual kindness, especially in the face of extreme unkindness. You will be surprised with the results, and with how your own life will be transformed as well.

GIVE IN NEW WAYS

Beyond giving gifts to those you usually remember, find a person who except for you would not have Christmas. And don't let the person know you are the giver.

FORGIVE

Experience the true joy of love by calling someone who has hurt you and saying "It's Christmas. Let bygones be bygones. I forgive you."

Follow these steps and Christmas, this year, may well be the most memorable of your life.



CHRISTMAS

Christmas celebrates the birthday of Jesus, our Savior. It is a time of rejoicing. Christ has come! The Messiah is born! Immanuel is with us! One of the joys of Christmas is that it isn't just one day. Christmas is a season of 12 days.

Christmas Prayers

December 25--Nativity of Our Lord

Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

December 26--St. Stephen, Deacon and Martyr

Grant us grace, O Lord, that like Stephen we may learn to love even our enemies and seek forgiveness for those who desire our hurt; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

December 28--The Holy Innocents, Martyrs

We remember today, O God, the slaughter of the holy innocents of Bethlehem by order of King Herod. Receive, we pray, into the arms of your mercy all innocent victims, and by your great might frustrate the designs of evil tyrants and establish your rule of justice, love, and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

December 31--New Year's Eve

Eternal Creator, you have placed us in a world of space and time, and through the events of our lives you bless us with your love. Grant that in this new year we may know your presence, see your love at work, and live in the light of the event which gives us joy forever--the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

A CHRISTMAS PRAYER

By Robert Louis Stevenson

*Help us remember the birth of Jesus,
that we may share in the song of the angels,
the gladness of the shepherds,
and the worship of the Wise Men.*

*Close the door of hate,
and open the door of love all over the world.
Let kindness come with every gift,
and good desires with every greeting.
Deliver us from evil by the blessing which
Christ brings, and teach us to be merry
with clear hearts.*

*May the Christmas morning
make us happy to be Thy children,
And the Christmas evening bring us to our beds
with grateful thoughts,
forgiving and forgiven.*

THE WORK OF CHRISTMAS

When the song of the angels is
still,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are
home,
When the shepherds are back
with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins:
To find the lost.
To heal the broken.

To feed the hungry.
To release the prison.
To rebuild the nations.
To bring peace among the
brothers and sisters.
To make music in the heart.



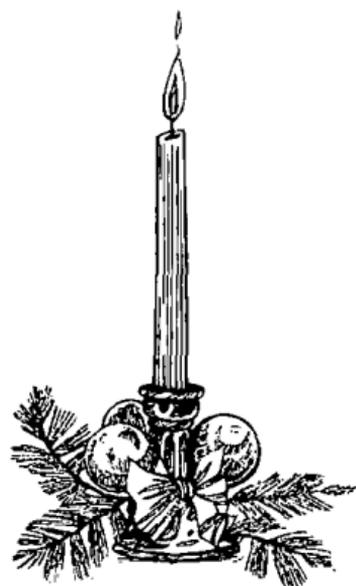
A CHRISTMAS PRAYER

On behalf of my colleagues in ministry and the entire staff of the Brick Church our prayer for you and yours is Christmas blessing.

The blessing of God,
whose love created
light and darkness,
mystery and wonder,
be with you.

The blessing of God,
whose love entered this world
vulnerable, naked, and helpless,
be with you always.

The blessing of God,
whose love burns in your heart,
transforming your living,
send you into the world
to be the incarnation of God's
love for others.



To be the incarnation of God's love for others is the greatest challenge and highest aspiration of a Christian.
God bless us everyone.