

CHRISTMAS LETTER 2022

Christmas is just around the corner! And for most of us, this is definitely a time to celebrate, but also one of the busiest seasons of the year. Nonetheless, as busy as we are, maybe we should stop for a moment, and reflect on what Christmas means to us personally...

For some, it might be a time to get together with family and friends, to share a good meal, and exchange presents. For others, it could be to watch the kids' excitement as they open their gifts, and make wonderful family memories. There is nothing wrong with that, but are we missing the real meaning of Christmas?

The Bible gives a detailed account of Jesus' birth in chapter two of the book of Luke. This is a very compelling story, which many families read every year on Christmas Day. I would say, however, that this Christmas story goes far beyond the nativity scene... The life of Jesus from His humble beginnings, born in a stable, to the day He returned to His Father in heaven after His resurrection is an amazing *true love* story written by God Himself to mankind. But what is *true love*? Is it based on our human emotions? The dictionary defines "love" as an intense feeling of deep affection; however, I believe that *true love* means so much more...

I think that raising my children was my first eye opener on what it really is. The love I felt holding my precious babies in my arms was out of this world! Yet, I must admit that growing up, they had moments when they weren't so "lovable"! Still, my love for them never wavered, and it never will until I take my last breath... I could say these very same words for my dear husband whom I love with all my heart. If need be, I wouldn't hesitate for a second to give my life for them.

The Bible says that God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish, but will have eternal life. It also says that God didn't send His Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. In essence, God gave His most precious gift of all! And we know how costly this gift was, don't we? Jesus Himself, knowing that His death was fast approaching, said to His disciples, "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command." Surely, His death on the cross demonstrated the extent of His love for us all...

Clearly, *true love* emanates from God Himself. It is the all-encompassing love of a Heavenly Father for His children. And because of His amazing love for us, our response should be first and foremost to love Him with all our heart, soul and mind. Then, to love others as ourselves. This isn't based on a feeling; rather, it's a determined act of the will, a joyful decision to put the welfare of others above our own.

Oh, I realize there will always be people who won't believe this Christmas story. On the other hand, there will always be those who will sincerely search for the truth. If you're one of them, ask yourself...how determined am I to find out? Why? Because your answer will make all the difference in the world. If you're searching as you would for a valuable treasure, you'll continue to search until you find it... Jesus Himself said, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened." In other words, if you sincerely ask God to lead you to the truth, He will answer you. My husband and I are living proof of that. And for us, this Christmas story is the most amazing, and life-changing story ever written! It's a message of

God's *true love* and grace; of faith and hope; of joy and peace that can't be compared to any other!

As we gather with our family and friends on Christmas Day, may it be a time of great celebration as we remember the birth of Jesus. May our hearts be filled with joy, peace, and love for Him as well as for our heavenly Father, and toward one another!

For those who will not be celebrating Christmas as usual this year because of challenging circumstances, I sincerely pray that God will somehow bring you comfort, peace and hope for better days ahead.

During this Holiday Season, let's also remember those who are less fortunate, and in real need of a Christmas miracle. Our part in making their lives a little brighter can make all the difference in the world.

With love, and warm wishes to you and to your loved ones for a **Merry and Blessed Christmas!**

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