

Pocket Full of  
Christmas



# Pocket Full of Christmas

Having a Purpose Filled Advent

Cheryle M. Touchton



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# Dedication



This book is lovingly dedicated to my husband, Bob, who makes all my Christmases special. It is also dedicated to my Sunday School teachers, Jim and Linda Gandy, who have encouraged the publication of this work and my ministry. Everyone should aspire to their model for Christian living. Special thanks go to Michelle LaMontagne for her love and support in editing.



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# Introduction



Dear Readers:

I love the sights, sounds, smells, and feelings of Christmas. The music reminds me of the angels singing on that first Christmas morning. Worship services prompt gratitude for God's precious gift to everyone who chooses to unwrap it. Family celebrations offer time to gather and love others with the love of Christ. Whiffs of cinnamon, evergreen, and peppermint remind me of the glory of God's creation. Gift giving allows us to lay gifts at the feet of the Christ Child. Everywhere, God reminds us that He came to earth as a baby.

I didn't always love Christmas. There was a time when I saw Christmas through jaded eyes. I complained that Christmas had lost its meaning due to retailers looking to increase revenue through commercialization, the pressure of having to buy gifts for demanding people, and the exhaustion created by the time pressures of the season. I grumbled my way through malls, parties, worship services, gift wrapping, and putting up decorations. When Christmas was over, I collapsed, bemoaning the staggering bills that began to arrive.

One Christmas, in the middle of my whining, a friend challenged me to look for the true meaning of Christmas. "You don't seem to enjoy anything about Christmas," she accused. Horrified, I realized it wasn't Christmas that had lost its meaning. I was the one who had lost Christ in the middle of the noise, chaos, and abundance of the season. I fell to my knees in confession.

All of a sudden, I had a Pocket Full of Christmas. As I started seeking Christ in Christmas, Jesus demonstrated that He is everywhere. Walking through the malls, I heard His carols. I noticed advertising and saw Christ in the word Christmas. Instead of seeing greedy retailers, I began to see a clever God using these unknowing retailers to spread His message. As I prayed about gift giving, each gift became a gift to the Christ child. As I prepared for family celebrations, I understood that by cooking and preparing for the people of Jesus, I was doing it for Him. I saw how my bitterness had kept me from organizing my activities so I had time for Christ.

## Pocket Full of Christmas

As I began asking God for knowledge of His will and the power to carry it out, God began orchestrating my Christmas celebrations so that every event was a tribute to Him. Christmas is now my favorite time of the year.

As Christians, we know *the* purpose of Christmas. Sometimes the difficulties and busyness of the holidays keep us from pursuing *our* purpose in the Christmas season. Demons such as exhaustion, discouragement, and loneliness become powerful tools of Satan for depleting our pockets as we scurry through malls, hurriedly wrap gifts, lament about finances, and remember the people no longer with us. *Pocket Full of Christmas* will help us refocus and go through this Christmas season finding Christ in each Christmas celebration.

A gift opens the way for the giver and ushers us into the presence of the great (Proverbs 18:16). At Christmas, we give gifts to the Holy Christ Child by giving gifts to each other (Matthew 25:40). *Pocket Full of Christmas* is a gift to be unwrapped each day of Advent, beginning on December 1 with each session taking between 30-45 minutes. You will need your Bible and a pen.

These devotions are designed to help you spiritually and organizationally during this busiest time of the year. Each day contains a meditation, a Bible Study, an application exercise, and an organizational exercise. There are daily instructions for how to use the four Appendices that are located at the end of the book.

- Appendix A: Requests of the Christ Child – A **prayer list** for documenting Christmas prayer requests and answers
- Appendix B: Gifts from the Christ Child – A **gratitude list** for documenting Christmas blessings
- Appendix C: Gifts to the Christ Child – A **gift list** for planning, budgeting, and recording gifts to others
- Appendix D: Celebrations for the Christ Child – A **“To Do” list** for organizing Christmas activities so you can enjoy your Christmas events and celebrations

As Christians, we serve God in our worshiping, shopping, wrapping, cleaning, decorating, and cooking. With the right attitude and preparation, each action we take in preparation for Christmas can be an act of obedience and love as we celebrate Christ’s birth. We each choose the spirit in which we serve. “Full pockets” is a metaphor for being prepared. My prayer for you this Christmas is that you fill your pockets with the Spirit of Christ. I look forward to spending Christmas with you.

Blessings,

Cheryle M. Touchton

Pocket Full of Change Ministries

# Godly Fellowship at Christmas

## **Meditation (3-5 Minutes)**

Begin by being still before God. Meditate on the words “Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.” (Psalm 46:10 NIV)

- Be still.
  - Clear your mind.
  - Breathe deeply.
  - Sit quietly.
- Know He is God.
  - Feel His presence.
  - Let His presence envelop you.
  - He is exalted among the nations and on the earth.
- Feel His power.
  - Surrender to His power.
  - Realize that He will be exalted among the nations this Christmas.
  - Claim His power.
- Listen to the voice of God.

## **Prayer (5-10 Minutes)**

### **Appendix A: Requests of the Christ Child**

- Ask God to speak to you during this devotional time.
- Pray for the Christmas season.

## Pocket Full of Christmas

- Pray for Christmas worship services and celebrations in the community.
- Pray for your church and your Christmas celebrations.
- Pray for our Nation during this holiday period.
- In Appendix A, write any specific Christmas concerns that need continued prayers.
- Pray for needs.
  - Pray specifically for the people in your lives.
  - Pray for your church.
  - Tell God your concerns and needs.
- In Appendix A, write any other specific requests that need continued prayers.
- Ask for knowledge of His will for you this Christmas and the power to carry it out.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to interpret the scriptures you are about to read.

### **Appendix B: Gifts from the Christ Child**

- Think about your blessings this Christmas.
- Praise God for His blessings.
- In Appendix B, write your top three blessings.

### **Appendix C: Gifts to the Christ Child**

- Ask God to help develop the attitude that each gift given to anyone is a gift to the Christ Child.
- Ask Jesus what He wants for Christmas this year.
- In Appendix C, prayerfully, fill in any gifts you plan to purchase between now and Christmas. Fill in as much information as you currently have.

### **Appendix D: Celebrations for the Christ Child**

- Pray about all of the Christmas celebrations on your calendar. This includes all family, church, community, and other Christmas events which you plan to attend, host, or participate.
- Turn to Appendix D and list these Christmas celebrations, praying about each one.
- Fill in your “To Do” list, praying about each action.

### **Bible Study (10-15 Minutes)**

Christmas is a time for fellowship with God, families, friends, and our church. God tells us, “It is not good for you to be alone” (Genesis 2:18). Healthy loving hearts need fellowship. If we fellowship with God and open our eyes and look around, God will send us people with whom to have deep and intimate fellowship. His word teaches us about godly fellowship.

## Godly Fellowship at Christmas

### **Background scripture**

The background Scripture is Luke 1:1-56. Open your Bible to the familiar passage. Today's devotion studies the fellowship between the two godly women God chose to begin the very first Christmas. We will study how Mary and Elizabeth fellowshiped with God and each other. We will study the following aspects of their fellowship: Love, the Holy Spirit, God the Father, and Jesus Christ.

God chose two unlikely women for His model for fellowship: Elizabeth who was too old to have a child and Mary who was too young and innocent. They were both a "disgrace" by their world's standards. Elizabeth's disgrace was her barrenness and Mary's, a pregnancy out of wedlock.

Our Holy God loves to do the unexpected. The world judged them unworthy but God judged Mary and Elizabeth worthy above other women. He chose Elizabeth to bear the son that would tell the world about the Christ Child. He chose Mary to bear His son.

### **Background - Elizabeth**

Read Luke 1:5-7. Elizabeth had been married for many years to Zechariah. Both Zechariah and Elizabeth were descendents of priests. They lived blameless lives. Zechariah was faithful to his priestly calling. Their religion taught them that children were blessings from God and in that time, people assumed the inability to have children was a sign of God's punishment. Most likely, Elizabeth and Zechariah were the subject of gossip and/or questions. How do you think Elizabeth felt about being barren?

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Read Luke 1:25. Elizabeth desperately wanted children. She pleaded with God and had faith He would answer. She waited and probably held her breath each month, feeling the shame and disgrace of her barrenness as the years progressed. Miraculously, God finally answered her prayers. How does she feel now?

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Read Luke 1:16-17. God planned Elizabeth's blessing for years (maybe since the beginning of creation) and gave even more than she asked for. What was the special purpose of Elizabeth's child?

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### **Background - Mary**

Mary was a young woman with the same dreams other young women had. Her questions to the angel indicate she was intelligent, confident, honorable, and pure. Mary was engaged to a kind Jewish man named Joseph and she expected to follow in the footsteps of the faithful people who taught her how to live and love.

Read Luke 1:29-31 and Luke 1:12-13. Again, God does the unexpected. An angel named Gabriel appeared to her, changing Mary's plans. Gabriel had been busy, visiting Zechariah and announcing Elizabeth's pregnancy. Understandably, Gabriel frightened both Zechariah and Mary. We can only hope Gabriel did not take these reactions personally. In fact, he must be used to these reactions because he had his response ready.

Read Luke 1:34. Gabriel told Mary she was going to bear the Son of God. Mary's parents had obviously told her the "facts of life" because she knew pregnancy was impossible. Why was Mary confused?

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Read Luke 1:38. In the end, Mary humbly accepted the will of God. She even rejoiced in the news. What was her answer?

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We can imagine the conversation with Mary's mother. "An angel said what?" Mary must have been tempted to ask Gabriel to come back and explain this to her mother. We do know that Mary left her home in a hurry (Luke 1:39). Did you ever wonder if her mother wanted to whisk her away before the pregnancy showed?

### **Love at Christmas**

Read Luke 1:43-44. Mary went straight to Elizabeth's house. Here we have one of the most beautiful demonstrations of love and friendship recorded in the Bible as these women shared their faith and joy, quoting Scripture, and worshipping God as they talked. What did Elizabeth say to Mary?

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## Godly Fellowship at Christmas

Baby John joined the celebration. What did he do?

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### **God, the Holy Spirit**

Read Luke 1:41-42. How do we know the Holy Spirit was part of their fellowship?

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### **God, the Father**

Read Luke 1:46-47. True fellowship includes worship of the Holy Father. Mary and Elizabeth praised God together as they sang and quoted scriptures. Write the words of their worship and let your spirit rejoice in God your savior.

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### **God, the Son**

Read Luke 1:42. The final piece of true fellowship is Jesus Christ. What were Elizabeth's words to Mary?

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## **Application (5-10 Minutes)**

### **Making It Personal**

List the people with whom you will fellowship the most this Christmas.

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Whom do you love?

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## Pocket Full of Christmas

With whom do you share godly fellowship? Which relationships include the presence of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

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Which relationships need improvement?

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Ask God to help you improve your relationships. What can you do to improve your relationships this Christmas?

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If you are lonely and need more fellowship, write a letter asking God to meet your needs. Specifically, ask God to send you one new person today.

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### **Praying Continuously (1 Thessalonians 5:17)**

- At meals and bedtime, pray for those closest to you.
- Tell at least one friend or family member how important they are to you.
- Look for His answers throughout the day.

### **Ending The Day**

- Ask God to help you with your fellowship with Him and those closest to you.
- How was your fellowship on this first day of the Christmas season?
- Confess your failures and claim your victories.

# The Eyes of the Christ Child



## **Meditation (3-5 Minutes)**

Begin by being still before God. Meditate on the words “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 9:6 KJV)

- Be still and know He is God.
- Think about Jesus as a child. What can you imagine Him doing? Do you think He enjoyed giving and receiving gifts? Imagine how the Christ Child would experience modern-day Christmas. View this Christmas through the eyes of the Christ Child.
- Let Him be your Wonderful Counselor. Surrender your problems and seek His wisdom.
- Let Him be your Mighty God. Surrender to His power. Feel and claim His power.
- Let Him be your Everlasting Father. Bask in His love as you feel His arms around you.
- Let Him be your Prince of Peace. Release all contentious thoughts or worries and experience His peace.
- Listen to the voice of God.

## **Prayer (5-10 Minutes)**

### **Appendix A: Requests of the Christ Child**

- Ask God to speak to you during this devotional time.
- Pray specifically for those who need to experience Christmas through the eyes of Christ.

## Pocket Full of Christmas

- In Appendix A, specifically name those in emotional or physical pain.
- In Appendix A, specifically name the non-Christians in your life.
- Prayerfully update Appendix A with new requests and any answers from God.
- Praise God for His answers.
- Ask for knowledge of His will for you this Christmas and the power to carry it out.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to interpret the scriptures you are about to read.

### **Appendix B: Gifts from the Christ Child**

- Praise God for His blessings.
- Add three more blessings to Appendix B.

### **Appendix C: Gifts to the Christ Child**

- Ask God to give you His spirit as you buy gifts for others.
- Turn to Appendix C and update the list.

### **Appendix D: Celebrations for the Christ Child**

- Turn to Appendix D and update your “To Do” list.
- Ask God if there are other celebrations in which you should participate. List them in Appendix D.

### **Bible Study**

Jesus came to earth like any other red-faced screaming baby. People celebrated His birth and gave gifts. He had to learn to walk, talk, and dress himself. He grew up loved by His earthly mother and father. He may have even had pimples, chicken pox, and the measles. As a child, Jesus taught adults and as an adult, He instructed us to let children be our teachers.

### **Background Scripture**

Read Matthew 19:13-15, Mark 10:13-16, and Luke 18:15-17 and notice how Jesus took time to be with children. How did He treat these children? What did He do for them?

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## The Eyes of the Christ Child

What lesson was Jesus trying to teach His pious and impatient disciples and us?

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### **The Faith of a Child**

Wide-eyed, brown-haired, giggly, wiggly Lauren was eight years old. “I can’t wait for Christmas. It’s my first Christmas as a Christian.” Earlier that year, Lauren asked Jesus to be a part of her life. “I was baptized,” she told me excitedly.

Lauren lived in a godly home and attended church all of her life. Jesus had always been part of her life in some way. I questioned her further. “You already knew about Jesus. Why is this Christmas different?”

“Christmas has to be different because everything is different now. Jesus is my friend. I need Him this year because two of my other friends moved away. Jesus will never move away.”

“What do you do with Jesus?” I asked.

“I talk to him. My brother is sick so I asked God to help him. My Daddy needs a job. I told Jesus.”

“What is your favorite part of Christmas?” I asked.

“Church is fun at Christmas. I love singing the Christmas carols. I get to go up front and light a candle.” I asked about her favorite Christmas service. “Christmas Eve. We turn off the lights and light candles.”

“What about the Bible? Do you have a favorite verse?” I prompted.

Without hesitation, she proudly answered, “Genesis 1:1. I can say it. ‘In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.’ This was the first verse I memorized. It reminds me that God made me. My favorite verse in the New Testament is John 3:16. ‘For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’”

“Lauren,” I smiled. “What does that mean to you?”

“This tells me I will live forever with Jesus.” Out of the mouths of babes.

Read John 3:16 and Genesis 1:1. What do these scriptures mean to you?

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Since Lauren is just eight, I knew there had to be more to Christmas for her. “What about gifts?” I quizzed. “What was the favorite gift you ever got?”

## Pocket Full of Christmas

Her face lit up. “I love gifts. When I was three, I got a toy car that fit over my legs. I sat on the ground and pretended to drive. It had a steering wheel and a gearshift. Driving this car made me feel like a grown up. When I got older, I liked different stuff. I gave the toy car to a girl in my church. Now I like Barbie Christmas gifts. Wearing a Barbie nightgown makes me feel pretty. I want a new Barbie for Christmas.”

“Lauren, why do you think we celebrate Christmas?” I was expecting her to say that we celebrate the birth of Jesus. Her answer was better.

“We celebrate God’s gift to us. Christmas reminds me of a song I sing in church. This song says we do not have to go looking for the gift of Christmas. Jesus is the gift that comes to us.”

In what way does Lauren have the eyes of the Christ Child?

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Read Luke 18:17. How are we to receive the kingdom of God?

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A footnote to Lauren’s story is that her brother got well and her father found a job.

### **Application (5-10 Minutes)**

#### **Making It Personal**

Name and pray for your favorite Christmas celebration. Why do you like it so much?

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Write your favorite Bible verse.

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What was your favorite Christmas gift? Thank God for it.

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## The Eyes of the Christ Child

Name a child who is innocent, bright, and full of joy. This can be an adult that you remember as a child or a child you currently know.

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How would this child react to life in your current circumstances this Christmas?

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What areas of your life need the eyes of the Christ Child?

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Ask God to help you have a childlike spirit throughout the day.

### **Praying Continuously (1 Thessalonians 5:17)**

Stop and briefly pray when you feel strong emotions (i.e., impatience, anger, excitement, frustration, or joy). As you feel each of these emotions, ask yourself this question: “If I were experiencing this with the faith of a child, how would I be reacting?” Continually pray for the faith of a child.

### **Ending the Day**

- Thank God for the children in your life.
- Did you have the eyes of the Christ Child today?
- Confess if necessary.
- Ask God for the eyes of the Christ Child.