

December 2011

THE SPICE

A taste of what's happening for women.

Have a Very "Mary" Christmas

Black Friday shopping. Decorating. Cooking. Cleaning. Cyber Monday. Party. Concert. More shopping. More cooking. More wrapping. More...

Phew! No wonder we're exhausted by the time the new year rolls around. We've had headaches from fretting, ringing bells in our ears, and heartburn from the undigested annoyance of being stuck in the slowest checkout line...again.

Yes, we know Jesus is the reason for the season, but every Christmas it seems there's a rematch of the classic Mary versus Martha battle....Martha in one corner, clutching a "to-do" list a mile long, fussing and fretting, and Mary, in the other corner, sitting on the floor in her sweatpants, Bible open on her lap, totally lost in her Jesus space.

Who will win the battle in your life this Christmas season? *Will you spend more time worshipping or working?* Here are four tips to help you have a very "Mary" Christmas this year:

1. **Sit down.** Stop doing and start sitting. There will always be more "doing." Sit down anyway. Jesus is waiting for you.
2. **Listen.** Peace and quiet is optional. Mary sat and listened to Jesus in the midst of pots and pans banging, her sister complaining, and guests milling about. Turn your head, and amid the chaos you'll hear Jesus, too.
3. **Give an offering.** Martha thought the most valuable thing to give Jesus was a good meal, but Mary poured herself out at his feet to listen and to learn from him. What do you consider more valuable than Jesus? Time? Work? Ministry? Stuff? Offer it to him as a present from the heart this Christmas.
4. **Worship.** Minimize the commercialism, and maximize the symbolism. Surround yourself with things that remind you of the real reason you celebrate—Jesus, the Word made flesh, come to earth to serve and to save.

Sitting at his feet, valuing relationship over performance, Mary demonstrated the posture of a worshipful woman, servant, and friend. *You can too.*

Wishing You a Very Mary Christmas!



THE WORD

"But the Lord said to her, 'My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details! There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her.'"

—Luke 10:41-42

THINK ABOUT IT

Details I am worried about:

The one thing I need to be concerned about:

Twelve Days of Devotion



No 12 days of French hens and leaping lords this Christmas! Unwrap the gift of Jesus, and experience the real joy of the season.

Create your own 12 days of devotion by reading and meditating on a portion of the Christmas story in Luke, chapter 2, each day. Or wrap your 12 favorite Scripture verses in pretty boxes or cards, and open the gift of God's promise for 12 days. Create "12 days of devotion" gifts for friends, family members, or a person going through a difficult time. Make it even more special by adding mini chocolates along with the Scriptures, to help them "taste and see that the Lord is good"!

Cooking the Mary Way

Kick Martha (and Martha Stewart) out of the kitchen, and just have fun! This "un-recipe" is great for cooking with kids or a group of girlfriends. Set out a variety of the ingredients listed below, along with dishes and utensils, and let the creating begin. (Don't forget to mix in love and laughter!)

- Mini graham cracker crusts
- Sugar cookies
- Chocolate and vanilla pudding
- Fruit pie filling
- Frozen (thawed) or fresh strawberries
- Bananas
- Candy bar crumbles
- Coconut
- Peanut butter
- Chocolate chips
- Cream cheese
- Whipped topping
- Christmas sprinkles

Have each person give their "recipe" a creative holiday name, and share your favorite Christmas memories together while you eat.



Silent Night, Holy Night

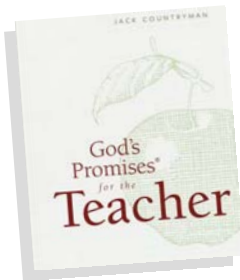
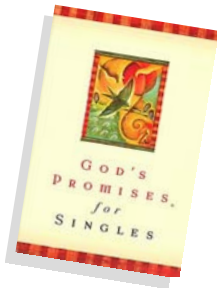
*Silent night, holy night,
All is calm, all is bright.*

"Silent Night" was written by a small-town Austrian priest, Father Joseph Mohr, in the early 1800s. Put to music by Franz Gruber, it was first sung in Oberndorf, Austria, by a small congregation, with a guitar accompaniment, on Christmas Eve 1818. The words and music of "Stille Nacht" captured the heart and holiness of the birth of Jesus so beautifully, it was destined to spread from its humble birthplace to become a favorite Christmas hymn around the world.

Recapture the beauty of this hymn with your family and friends this Christmas season by sharing it in a special way. In a popular ritual in Austrian churches, families bring a lantern or candle with them to the midnight Christmas Eve service. At the conclusion of the service, the priest lights a special candle to symbolize the birth of Jesus. As families leave, they stop and light their lantern from the candle to symbolize taking the light of Jesus into the world.

Share the wonder and light of Jesus' birth this Christmas by taking your own lantern and candles and stopping at homes to sing "Silent Night." Then light a candle from yours to leave with them and pass the light of Jesus on to the world!





Media Morsels



Book Review

God's Promises® Books

Authors: Jack Countryman and Terri Gibbs

Publisher: Thomas Nelson

God has a promise in Scripture for our every need, so what could be a better present than to give the gift of God's promises to a friend, family member, co-worker, or teacher this Christmas?

Here are just a few of the God's Promises titles available. There's sure to be one that fits every person on your gift list!

God's Promises for Baby—Special illustrated promises for baby.

God's Promises for Couples—Inspiration to draw couples closer to God.

God's Promises for Mothers—Reminders to mothers of their special role in the lives of their children.

God's Promises for Singles—Scripture verses selected especially for singles.

God's Promises for the Teacher—Timeless guidance and wisdom for teachers.

Find God's Promises books at your local Christian bookstore, online, or at thomasnelson.com.

Movie Review

The Nativity Story

Release Date: 2006

Runtime: 101 minutes

Genre: Drama

Rating: PG for some violent content

One couple. One journey. One child who would change the world forever.

Experience THE story with your family this Christmas.

Join Mary and Joseph on their journey to Bethlehem. Watch with the shepherds in a field on the starlit holy night. Hear the first sounds of Jesus' voice. Travel across the miles with the wise men. Laugh and cry as you experience the real story of Christmas.

The Nativity Story is an inspiring family film that won nominations and awards for outstanding music and performance. The actors and breathtaking cinematography bring the story of Jesus' birth to life with beauty and integrity to the scriptural accounts.



December

A Taste of What's Happening for Women

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
						Mom's Group Cookie Exchange 4-5:30 p.m. At CCC
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Youth Family Christmas Worship Service 6:00 p.m.						
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Christmas Program "The First Leon" Both Services						Christmas Eve Service 5:30 p.m.
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
MERRY CHRISTMAS One Service 10:30 a.m.						

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