

A Gift of Love and Peace

Go easy on those who hesitate in the faith. Go after those who take the wrong way. Be tender with sinners, but not soft on sin.

Jude: 22-23, *The Message*

As the days of Advent slip past, it's difficult not to become overwhelmed with our preparations for Christmas: decorate the tree; string lights on the house; find the perfect gift for everyone on our list; organize a holiday party; finalize travel plans... the list could fill this page. Christmas traditions can be a lot of fun, but they can also be the source of stress and bring out the worst in us: selfishness, impatience, entitlement.

As Christians, we know that we're supposed to be celebrating the gift of baby Jesus - a gift that will teach us how to love one another and live in peace. When I feel overwhelmed, I take a moment to remember this, and I always feel better. I also try to share that peace with others; show a bit more patience, a bit more forgiveness, a friendly smile... A modest gesture of compassion can do amazing things. It can even open the heart of a non-believer to the love that we know through Christ.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, open our hearts and calm our souls.

Please grant us the patience we need to share Jesus' love with the world, especially with those who don't believe. Amen.

Jonathan Leach

Additional Scripture Readings:

Psalm 42

Ezekiel 47: 1-12