

Greetings Family!

Welcome to December 2024!

As we enter this season (which is my most favorite time of year!), my heart is filled with joy, excitement, and gratitude! Why PJ? Well, for family, for our church, for the simple things in life, and for the greatest gift we could ever receive—Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

It's an absolute privilege to celebrate the birth of the One who brings us hope, peace, "a renewed focus for tomorrow", and of course - salvation! The prophet Isaiah declared, "*For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*" - Isaiah 9:6 This powerful reminder sets the stage and tone for this season. It helps to prepare our hearts to reflect on Him.

Let's take time to cherish the moments with our loved ones and to share the joy of Jesus with everyone around us. Whether it's a kind word, a thoughtful gift, or a prayer of encouragement, we can re-gift His love to a world in need. John 3:16 says, "*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*"

This Christmas, I personally want to challenge you with **five simple steps** that will make a **huge** difference in those around you:

1. **Do something meaningful and memorable with your family.** Whether it's baking cookies together, reading the Christmas story from Luke 2, or serving at a community event, create memories that will remind your family of God's love and the joy of giving.
2. **Spend personal time with God.** In the busyness of the season (shopping for that perfect gift, going to parties and dinners with those closest to you), make sure to set aside time each day to read scripture, pray, and reflect on **the** Lord's goodness. Simply spending 10-15 minutes can help to refocus your heart on the true meaning of Christmas.
3. **Reach out to someone in need.** Think of a neighbor, coworker, or friend who may be struggling during this time and extend God's love to them. Show them that you really care!!!! This could be through a small act of kindness, an invitation to church, an offer to pray into their situation, or just a conversation over the phone, video chat, or at your **favorite** coffee spot. Just reach out.
4. **Keep your gifts simple and heartfelt.** Instead of stressing over extravagant presents, focus on giving meaningful gifts that reflect your love. What are you saying PJ? "Don't overdo it...and please stay within your means! There is life after Christmas." Can I get an Amen!!!!
5. **Joyfully receive the season (This is my best advice!!!).** Make it a point to laugh and keep it going! Enjoy those that you will connect with...all of them!! Don't allow the unexpected to trip you up...simply put, "tuck and roll" with it! Finally, refuse to allow stress to enter your space!!! When you see stress coming your way or invading your home, say this, "Stress...sorry, but you are NOT welcome here! Get out, in Jesus' Name!"

Jewels and I are very excited for all God has in store for us as a church family, and I pray this season will be a time of great blessings for you and your loved ones. If you live in the area, and we haven't seen you in a while, please consider stopping by to worship with us. We would love to see you. Merry Christmas all!

Blessings,
PJ