

Christmas Past and Present



Memories of Christmases past shimmer in my mind.

- My sisters and I sneaking out of bed and tiptoeing down creaky stairs, anxious for our first glimpse of the Christmas tree.
- Baking and frosting Christmas cookies.
- Waiting my turn to open the next door on the Advent calendar.
- The scent of incense wafting in the air at Christmas Eve mass.
- Visiting Grandma and Grandpa and Uncles Dave and Bill on Christmas afternoon.
- Holiday singalongs with my huge extended family.

Laughter and love float around the room, like angels' wings.

- Grandma and Grandpa Herrmann singing Silent Night in German.
- The Hallelujah chorus ringing through the auditorium and echoing in my heart.
- My husband noisily putting together a bunk bed on Christmas Eve.
- My own little children excitedly bounding up the stairs on Christmas morning, a bundle of laughter and energy.

The older I get, the more I reflect on those times, those people who are no longer with us, or, like my children, who have grown up to establish their own families and traditions. Intertwined in the memories is a sadness for what has changed.

I Miss ...

I miss my mom, my aunts and uncles, my grandparents who are no longer with us. I miss those shared celebrations of laughter and love. I miss my children as little ones, carefully holding our candles together in the Christmas Eve service. I miss seeing them race up the stairs on Christmas morning.

These are precious memories, part of the fabric of who I am.

Yet, It's Time To Move On

But I realize God doesn't intend for me to dwell in my Christmases past (or my life past) because if I do that, I will miss my Christmas present, the present life that is waiting to be discovered and lived now – and shared with the next generation.

This quote by Joyce Meyer puts it in perspective for me:

We often spend our mental time in the past or in the future, instead of living in the moment we have now. When we don't truly give ourselves to what we are doing at the moment, we become prone to anxiety. If we live in the now, we will find the Lord there with us.

Joyce Meyer Battlefield of the Mind Bible, p. 814

If I'm honest, I was spending too much time wishing that this Christmas, this season of life looked more like some past ones. But that cannot be. It *should not* be. God has given us this Christmas present, this life present and has promised us His presence *now*. After all, He is called the Great I AM. Not the great I was.

We are to rejoice in Him for who He is, for the amazing gift of heaven intersecting earth through Jesus' miraculous birth – to be celebrated in our current season of life. If we just let Him, He will make every season of our lives purposeful and filled with His presence. It is the miracle of Emmanuel, God With Us.

Merry Christmas!

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