

## Timeless Transformations

### *The Reason for the Season*

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Earlier in the week I was talking to Mother and she said she was going over to Joe Lynn's house to pick up a surprise gift. The next day I asked her what it was. She said it was a plaque that read **the reason for the season**. Yesterday as I was putting up my beautiful snow villages that I've collected for 30+ years, I internalized the process of setting up each house. It's more than plugging in each one to make sure the light works. Or finding the best village to set it up in since I now have four towns! Or listening to your Dad complain because it is so much work. Or getting bits of snow all over the house and creating a big mess. Or joking around with you about *snow village training*. It is so much more than that!

Today I am inspired to talk about the internalization of Christmas because the reason we celebrate is different for each of us. To illuminate this inspiration, I'm using pictures from 1993. Karsyn would have been about 9 months old, Kevyn was 3 and Kendall was 6. This was Karsyn's 1st Christmas and she wasn't even walking. Guess what? The date on this picture is December 3, 1993 which is the same month and date as today! The camera that I was using imprinted the date on the picture. It is amazing timing I must say. Are you girls adorable? I bet you didn't remember that you actually started your *snow village training* at a very early age!

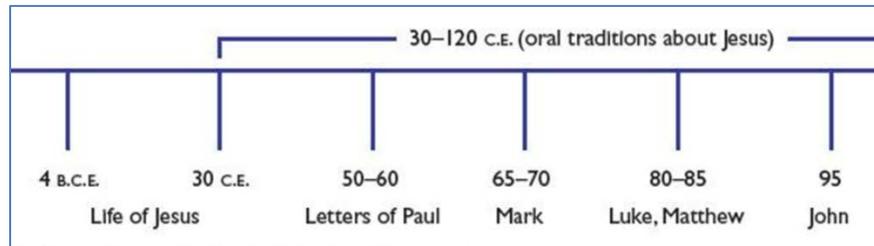


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Christmas is a special time. In our culture, like it or not, Christmas is about the birth of “Jesus Christ” hence the name “Christ-mas.” But the interpretation of Jesus’ birth story varies depending on our perspective. Even the writers of the Bible’s New Testament Gospels interpreted the birth of Jesus in very different ways. Most people don’t even know that the Gospels of Mark and John don’t even mention the birth story. Nor does the Apostle Paul in his letters which makes up two-thirds of the New Testament. Is that mind-boggling? Each of the Gospel writers take on a different slant. Each had a unique approach about what they were emphasizing. The writings weren’t even recorded until 20-100 years after the death of Jesus. Here’s the timeline and a brief summary of the writer’s message about the birth story.



- The Gospel of Matthew was written for the Jews. It was a Jewish perspective. He was trying to convince the Jews that Jesus was the long awaited Messiah. He takes the time to trace the genealogy of Jesus back to Abraham in the Bible’s Old Testament. He wanted all Jews to know that Jesus was related to Abraham. Matthew writes that Jesus was born in a house, Matthew 2:1-2, 11
- The Gospel of Mark was written for the Romans. A Roman would not be interested in the birth of a Jewish baby. The birth of Jesus isn’t in the Gospel of Mark.
- In the Gospel of Luke, Luke was a gentile, e.g. not Jewish. He was a Hellenistic Greek physician. He was more of a Universalist. He took the genealogy of Jesus all the way back to Adam and Eve. Luke was trying to communicate that the birth of Jesus and the meaning of it was not exclusive to one people or one religion but for all people. He states fear not, I bring you good tidings of great joy which should be to all people (not any exclusive group). For unto this day a savior is born, Christ the Lord. In Luke 2:1-7, he says Mary wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them. (He doesn't say *house* like the Gospel of Matthew does, which is a contradiction like many references in the Bible.
- Then in the Gospel of John, he uses a metaphysical approach of symbolism. He is actually the first to reference the term Christ! This is 60+ years after Jesus’ death. Jesus never referred to himself as the Christ! The Gospel of John leaves out the birth story completely. His perspective is that Christ is the true light that enlightens every man coming into the world. That same light is in all of us. It’s more of a Universalist message.

Even more mind-boggling and you know this, no one knows the real birthday of Jesus! Based on the calendar of the moon and other references in the New Testament, it is estimated that he was born in April. No date is given in the Bible, so why do we celebrate it on the 25th of December? The early Christians argued as to when it should be celebrated. And how about this: the first recorded date of Christmas being celebrated on December 25th was in 336 during the time of the Roman Emperor Constantine. Then it was a few years later when Pope Julius officially declared that the birth of Jesus would be celebrated on the 25th of December.

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I go through all of that history so you will clearly understand the facts about Jesus' birth story. That then gives us the flexibility to what decide what **the reason for the season** is to us. Here are a few of my reasons.

It's a time to make everything beautiful. Why not transform the house and decorate with lights and sentimental things? When I get out all of my Christmas decorations it's about internalizing each one and thinking about where it came from. It may have been from GG Messick, Neenie, my Mother, you girls, you're Dad, or just something I bought special for our home. It's the way that I get in the spirit of Christmas.

You gotta love these old Christmas decorating pictures. I'm wearing a Cancun shirt that I had bought the week before when you're Dad and I celebrated our 10 year wedding anniversary. We had just gotten back from a week vacation. We were energized and ready to make our Christmas special that year, which started out with decorating! Think about it. Three beautiful healthy girls with Christmas around the corner. Life was great and we knew it.



Another reason for the season is that it's a time to spend with family. Sometimes we don't think about our lives in the larger perspective. It may be more fun to spend time with others. It may be a lot of trouble and sometimes even stressful to spend time with family. But, the family that proceeds us will not be here forever. Can you imagine the love Neenie and GG Jackson had for you three? I understand it much more now that I have a granddaughter! Can you imagine if we hadn't take the time to spend with them? Never underestimate this because you will be regretful.

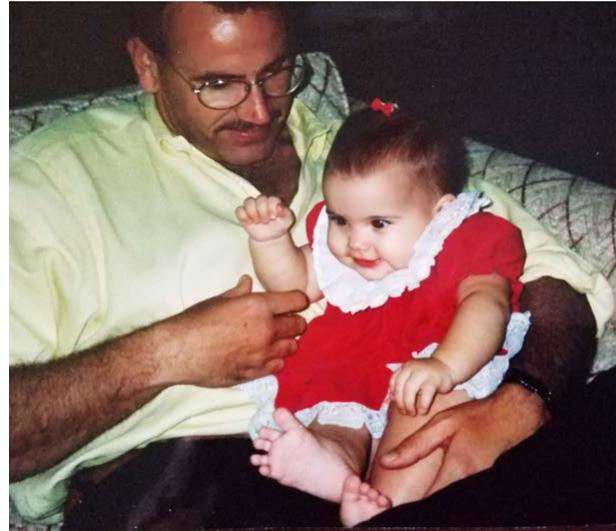


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It's a time to love and have fun with the youngest of generations. The pure fun of spending time with our closest family members, and giving gifts, and playing tricks, and overspending, and passing on traditions, and going to so much trouble ... is creating that spark of joy in children. Look at Karsyn's little bow and piggies. Your Dad obviously decided she didn't need her shoes on. I imagine he was pulling a little trick on Karsyn or doing something to make her smile. All three of your dresses are so pretty in red..... so pretty! The date on these pictures are December 18th so we were probably celebrating with GG Jackson the weekend before Christmas.



It's a time to bring the year to a close and celebrate. These pictures were on the next page of my photo album so it was probably taken one of the Saturday nights before Christmas. We had gone to a party at the Hyatt Regency in downtown Houston. It was a radio party with K-101 when Lanny worked there. I remember we got dressed up and stayed the night at the hotel. We had a great a time. I also remembered questioning whether we should spend the money. We were in debt from the James street house. We had just spent a fortune in Cancun. We had three kids that were expecting a big Christmas. But we went. All these years later, my memories aren't on balancing the bank account. My memories are about the fun times we had and about how hard we stayed focused on our relationship as a couple. Never forget that either! Children have a keen sense of what the status of their parent's relationship is.

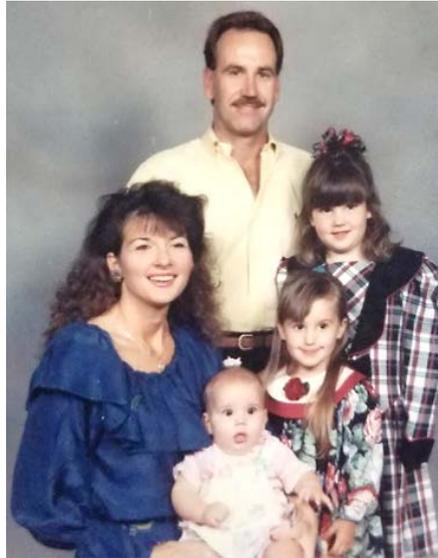


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It's also a time to pause, reflect on where we are in our lives, and a time to make plans for the upcoming year. A lot of times it's signified by a Christmas picture. This picture was taken at the First Presbyterian Church for the church directory. This was before we had made the decision to part ways with traditional Christianity. It was important to Neenie so we did it. I believe it was the last time we had our picture made for the directory. Apparently Karsyn was a little surprised by the flash!



Lastly, Christmas is a time that heightens spiritual vibrations during the Christmas season. Call it whatever you want, I call it a Christ energy. That's **the reason for the season!** Whether we believe in the literal Jesus Christ birth story, we can't deny the feelings that resonate with us to be nicer, to be more giving, to be more compassionate, to be more grateful, and to uncover our own Christ self that is the very best we can be.

As I was arranging my Christmas village yesterday, notice that I placed the Christmas houses that I had back in 1993 over on Dahl's side of the room, next to her new tree. Notice the three dolls that Neenie collected for each of you are now prominently displayed under Dahl's tree. I thought it was appropriate to have dolls next to Dahl's decorated Christmas area! I hope you will be inspired to give thought to what **the reason is for the season** is for you this year!



I love you more than all of the reasons I can think of for the season – Love Mom!