

Special Issue

MOTIVATED

THE MAGAZINE THAT MOVES YOU!

THE GUIDE TO GIVING

You're Not Alone

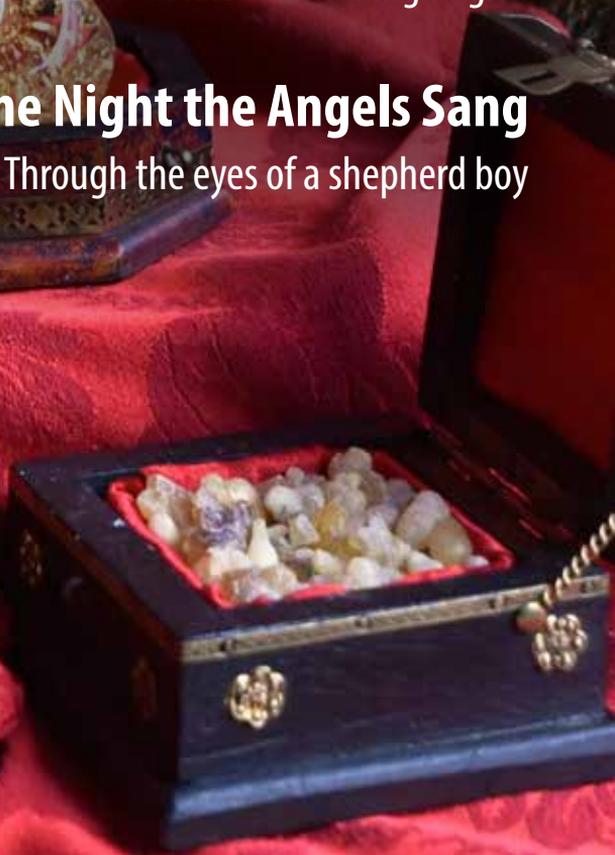
The gifts we treasure most

Pass It On

We all have something to give

The Night the Angels Sang

Through the eyes of a shepherd boy



Christmas in Bethlehem
A poem.....3

The Guide to Giving
The gifts we treasure most.....4

Gifts of Love.....5

Pass It On
We all have something to give.....6

What One Person Can Do.....7

The Night the Angels Sang
Through the eyes of a shepherd
boy.....8

Answers to Your Questions
How to make New Year resolutions
stick.....10

Get Your Loaf Pans Ready
He will send the wheat crop.....11

Notable Quotes
The New Year.....12

Editor:
Christina Lane
Souad Abuhalm
Design:
Trishna Brooks
Jon Archer

Please contact us at:

Visit us at:
www.motivatedmagazine.com

Email:
motivated@motivatedmagazine.com

© 2004 Motivated
All Rights Reserved

Christmas time and the approaching New Year have a way of bringing out the best in people. It is a time when we tend to look upward in search of peace and hope; inward for the resources to care and give freely to others; and forward to brighter and better days ahead.

But what about this year? Considering all that is happening in the world around us, is there any reason to believe that peace and brighter days will ever come?

One of my favorite true stories makes a great thought for Christmas and for the coming year—a time when we all hope to make a difference and change things for the better. Perhaps you remember it from David Fontaine’s article in the first issue of *Motivated*. It’s about a humble shepherd who single-handedly transformed a barren region by planting nuts as he watched his sheep graze on a different hillside each day. Over 20 or 30 years that one shepherd reforested the entire area, which brought back the wildlife and improved the soil for farming. After that, more people moved to the once nearly deserted region and it became alive and prosperous. The shepherd slowly but surely made a difference in his part of the world.

What turned out to be a great thing was probably the result of a sudden inspiration. How many others, do you suppose, would have brushed off the idea as crazy, impossible, or not their job? Not this shepherd. He believed and put his inspired idea into action.

What he did each day wasn’t especially difficult, but he stuck with it day after day. Great things are often the result of patient plodding. He did what he could do and trusted God to do the rest.

We, too, can make a difference and influence those we come in contact with for good through our attitude and actions. A song that was popular some years ago put it like this: “If everyone lit just one little candle, what a bright world this would be!” We may not be able to be a light to the whole world, but we can light our part of the world. *We all can.*

From all of us at *Motivated*, may God bless you and make us all a blessing to others this Christmas, in the New Year, and always!

Christina Lane
For Motivated

christmas in bethlehem



*Winter fires were burning bright,
Travelers journeyed in the night.
A husband led his weary wife
through the falling snow,
To a humble cattle stall, nowhere else to go,
Christmas in Bethlehem,
many years ago.*



*There was born a baby boy
Mother's heart was filled with joy;
Shepherds heard an angel's voice
Fill the night with song.
Wise men wondered at a star,
With strange celestial glow,
Christmas in Bethlehem,
many years ago.*

*Yet in Bethlehem today
Children fear to run and play.
Mothers cry and fathers pray
For healing from the pain,
And around the weary world,
Echoes the refrain,
Christmas in Bethlehem,
but when shall true peace reign?*



*One day soon the Prince of Love
Will return from skies above.
When the world has had enough
of pain and tears and war.
Then shall songs of joy and praise,
ring out from shore to shore,
Christmas in Bethlehem,
Peace on earth once more.*



By Michael Dooley

Modern marketers have found so many holidays to celebrate with gift giving, and they come around so fast that it's sometimes hard to remember which one we're shopping for or why. But stop for a moment, and recall the most memorable gifts you have ever received and why you still hold them dear. Were they the things you could see and hold, or the love those gifts were wrapped in?

This Christmas and always, may God's example be our guide to giving. ■



Stop for a moment,
and recall the most
memorable gifts you have
ever received and why
you still hold them dear.

—By Linda Salazar



A successful young attorney said, "The greatest gift I ever received was a gift I got one Christmas when my dad gave me a small box.

Inside was a note saying, 'Son, this year I will give you 365 hours—an hour every day after dinner. It's yours. We'll talk about what you want to talk about, we'll go where you want to go, play what you want to play.

It will be your hour!"

"My dad not only kept his promise," the attorney went on, "but every year he renewed it. That was the greatest gift I ever received.

I am the result of this time." ■



Gifts of Love

Before Christmas, a teacher in Africa had told his students how as an expression of their happiness and thanks to God people give each other presents on Christmas day.

On Christmas morning one of his students brought the teacher a beautiful, lustrous seashell. When the teacher asked the boy where he had discovered such an extraordinary shell, the boy said he had walked many miles to a certain bay, the only spot where such shells could be found.

"I think it was wonderful of you to travel so far to get this lovely gift for me," the teacher said.

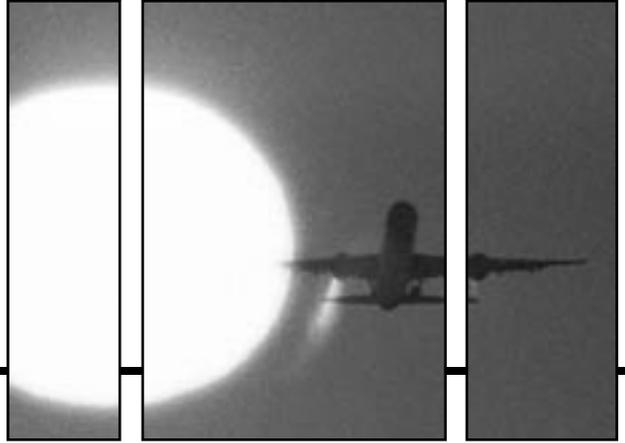
The boy's eyes brightened.

"Long walk part of gift." ■



WE ALL HAVE SOMETHING TO GIVE

PASS IT ON
PASS IT ON



I sat back in my seat and waited for takeoff. My back ached and my limbs were stiff from the five-hour drive to the airport and the two-hour first leg of my flight home. I wasn't looking forward to another five hours in cramped economy-class seating.

My mind drifted to my daughter, not yet 18 years old, who I had just taken to live with her older brother for a while. I was going to miss her! It was her first time away from home, and my heart ached at the thought of not having her near me. I knew this feeling well. She was the fifth of our six children to leave home. I should be getting used to it, I thought. But the same empty feeling started to overtake me. Tears burned in my eyes, but I determined not to give in to my emotions.

As the plane taxied down the runway, I closed my eyes and asked God to grant me a safe flight and to keep my dear daughter and the rest of my children safe in His care. I thanked Him that He always had. A still small voice whispered to my heart that all would be well with my daughter, just as it had been with her four older brothers who had left home before her.

The plane took off, climbed, and then leveled off.

Peace came over me as I remembered how God had never failed to answer my

prayers for our children. Tears of longing turned to tears of gratitude as I thanked Him for His faithfulness and comfort.

When I opened my eyes, I saw that a woman and a little girl about three years old had moved into the seats next to mine, which had been empty at takeoff. Although I had hoped for empty seats beside me so I could stretch out, I understood how the stewardess probably felt they needed the space.

I watched the mother struggle with her daughter, who was tired and whiny and wanted to sleep. I offered the woman my pillow and an extra blanket to cushion the child's head. With a grateful look, she explained they'd already flown for eight hours. Soon the little girl fell asleep, half in her own seat and half in her mother's lap.

A meal was served, we made a little small talk, the stewardess collected the trays, and the woman tried to get some rest. A few minutes later, I noticed a tear run down her cheek, then another. She tried to brush them away before I could see, but quickly realized I already had and she gave me a sheepish smile.

"Are you all right?" I asked.

"Yes, yes," she said. But the tears kept coming.

I gently touched her arm. "Is there

We can always drop
a little love into the hearts
of those we pass by,
even if only with a word,
a smile, or a look of sympathy,
and they will know that
God has loved them that day!
His Spirit will tell them so.
A little bit of love goes such a long way! "
— David Fontaine



anything I can do for you?"

After a valiant effort to compose herself, she explained that she'd just taken her 16-year-old son to study abroad. She had seven other children, but he was the oldest and the first one to leave home. She missed him already.

I looked at her in amazement. Here I was, sitting next to a woman who was experiencing the exact same emotions I had only minutes earlier, thinking about my own dear daughter.

I took her hand in mine and I told her that I understood. I explained about my daughter and shared the comforting thoughts that had been whispered to my heart just a short while before. She listened intently and smiled through her tears when I told her we could pray for our children and then trust God to care for them.

I soon learned that we were of different faiths, but we both acknowledged that the God we loved also loved our children and would look out for them. We talked more during the rest of the flight, exchanged phone numbers, and promised to get in touch in the future.

After parting, I could not help but marvel at the way God so perfectly engineers things. I believe He worked out those seating arrangements on the plane so I could pass on some words of encouragement and reassurance to someone else. — And in doing so we were both comforted. "

**W
H
A
T

O
N
E

P
E
R
S
O
N

C
A
N

D
O**

If we stop to think about it,
there's no limit to how
useful our life can be.

We can show we care
to the unloved,
give sympathy,
be friendly and congenial,
and lend a listening ear
or a helping hand to
someone in need.

We can always be cheerful,
and see the positive side
of every situation,
and help others to
do the same.

Anyone who wants to
can really make a
difference in the world,
and can motivate
others to do the same. "

— Maria Fontaine



THE NIGHT THE ANGELS SANG

THROUGH THE EYES OF A SHEPHERD BOY

By Lorraine Rose

Have you ever wondered what it must have been like for a little shepherd boy that first Christmas Eve, when he heard the angels sing? Close your eyes for a moment and imagine that night so long ago. Let's travel back in time and try to catch just a little glimpse of what happened that cold wintry night in the fields near Bethlehem through the eyes of a little shepherd boy...

Hi! My name is Hamid. I lived long ago in a country in the Middle East. A little clay brick house was my home, where I lived with my mother and father, my older brother and two little sisters. Mother and Father were weavers, and my older brother helped them in the trade.

Hard times had hit our little family when one evening at the dinner table Father said to me, "Son, you know how things are difficult for us now. Our neighbor has agreed to give us a portion of his wool, come year's end, if you help him guard his sheep at night." I was a boy of seven, ready to help in bringing my family through those difficult times. That was how I came to be a shepherd lad.

I would sit upon the hillside many a night, bundled up in

layers of rough woven clothes, feeling the breeze on my cheeks and hovering close to the little campfire an older shepherd had made. Most nights passed uneventfully, and we would eventually fall asleep peacefully around the fire, with the sheep in the nearby field. Other nights we had to chase off wild animals that would creep close to the fold. But we never lost a single sheep. God took care of our flock and us.

I was the youngest in our group of shepherds, and the evenings when we would sit around the fire, merrily singing old songs, were times of great joy for me. One old shepherd—Zacharias was his name—would at times talk longingly about the promised Messiah. I remember sitting and listening earnestly. In his shaky voice he told of one who would come to bring us life, love, and freedom. One who would be like our shepherd, caring for us and bringing all the stray sheep back into his fold.

“He will come to bring peace,” Zacharias said, “to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and the recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised. Oh, I long to live to see such a day!”

The old man’s voice trailed off. With his words still ringing in my ears, I prayed to our God that I, too, could see that day.

Months had passed since I had first become a little shepherd boy, when one exceptionally cold night, after the coals in our campfire were stirred and the sheep had gone to sleep, we

huddled together and dozed off to sleep ourselves. I remember thinking, “What a beautiful starry night! The stars are so big and bright, I feel I could reach out and touch them!”

I began to dream of light, love, and warmth. All of a sudden I was startled awake! I opened my eyes and gazed into a dazzling light that didn’t hurt my eyes. A wonderful heavenly being stood in the sky above us, his long golden hair waving in the wind. At first we were afraid, but any trace of fear vanished when the beautiful angel spoke. He said: “Fear not! I bring you tidings of great joy! For unto you is born this day, in Bethlehem, Christ the Lord! You shall find him wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger!”

Before I could even fathom what I had heard, the sky all around us lit up in the most spectacular display of light! I saw thousands—I couldn’t count them, but there seemed to be thousands—of magnificent angels singing, “Glory to God in the highest, and on Earth peace, good will toward men!”

The music and singing that filled the air around us blended in the most outstanding harmony. We were speechless! Our eyes were wide with wonder! Our hearts were filled with joy! Our spirits felt as if they would float up into the sky!

When the beautiful harmonious sound of the angels’ voices had drifted off into the night, Zacharias fell to his knees

Continued on page 11

Answers to Your Questions

Q: Each New Year I make resolutions

that I feel will help me get more out of life. But no matter how great a start I make, I can't seem to keep up the momentum. What can I do to stick with my resolutions and get the results I want?

All He needs is your cooperation and for you to keep putting forth effort in the right direction. Here are some simple tried and proven techniques for solid progress:

A: We can all relate. It's difficult when we feel we're not making progress in the areas we know we need to improve in. As much as we try and as many resolutions as we make, we often can't seem to break bad habits or form new good ones. That can become so frustrating and disappointing that we eventually lose faith that we *can* change.

Because we've tried before and failed, we feel we might as well give up.

Though you may sometimes feel that way, the change you desire is possible. With God's help you can get the results you're looking for.

Don't try to improve in too many areas at once. Determine what your priorities are, and stick to those. Once you're making consistent progress in the big areas, add the others one or two at a time.

Program the change into your daily or weekly schedule. Unless you set aside specific times to take positive action to enact the change—to get more exercise, for example—it will probably get lost in the press of everything else you have to do, like it always has.

Confide in someone. Few things encourage and strengthen resolve like sharing your desire to change with somebody who respects you, understands your reasons, and will cheer you on. This is why support groups are so successful.

Be open to help from others. It takes humility to ask your husband or wife, a close friend, or a coworker, for their honest opinion about how you're progressing toward your goal, but they can provide insight as well as encouragement. Nearly everyone in the record books and history books had a coach, trainer, mentor, or supportive mate.

Make a pact. Work on it together with someone who shares the same goal. Challenge each other. Spur each other on. Help one another up when one stumbles. Victories are sweetest when they're shared.

Be patient. Progress usually comes one step at a time, and sometimes that one step is the result of two steps forward and one step back. As long as you're making some forward progress, you're on your way toward reaching your goal. Consistency is the key. It takes six weeks to two months to build a new habit.

Don't quit. If you slip back into your old habits, don't condemn yourself and don't give up. Review your list of reasons for wanting to change. Re-evaluate your means for making that change. Fix whatever went wrong. Pray, and then get up and try again. Every setback that you don't let stop you actually strengthens you.

Happy New Year—and happy new you!

Be fully persuaded that the change is needed. Make a list of reasons for making the change.

Ask for God's help. If you're convinced that a certain change is what God wants for you, you can ask for and expect His help.

Set realistic goals. Unrealistic goals are demoralizing and therefore counterproductive. Don't attempt to break the world record in the high jump on your first try. You'll only become discouraged and quit far short of your potential, let alone the record. Start with the bar at a height you know you can clear with a little work, then raise it a notch at a time.

and exclaimed: "Praise God! He has shown His great love to us! Let us go down to Bethlehem and find the Child, who is the King of love!"

"When I see Him, what can I offer Him? I have nothing. I'm so young and so small and so poor," I thought, as we hurried to the town. My thoughts were interrupted when we arrived at the entrance of a humble cave. We knocked, and a kindly man came to the doorway. Love and warmth poured forth from that old cave with awesome radiance. We knew we had found Jesus!

I walked up to the manger in which He lay, and His beautiful newborn face shone with love and peace. I knelt and kissed His tiny forehead. Tears filled my eyes. His mother, lying next to the manger, put her arm around me and

stroked my straggly hair. That moment changed my life forever!

We were too filled with the wonder of the experience to think deeply about it till afterwards. When I once again found myself sitting upon the hillside, gazing into the starry night that surrounded us and our sheep, I wondered why, on the most wonderful and divine night in all the world, would the angels come and proclaim the good news to us—a bunch of ragged shepherds?

Then I understood that God loves us all, no matter how small we are. His love is extended without limit and without partiality to every child in the world. Even me—a poor little shepherd boy! Suddenly I knew what gift I could give Him! I had nothing earthly to offer, but I had been given a heart full of love that I could give back to Him by living to show God's love and light to others. ■

get your loaf pans ready

Granddaddy had a milling company—not a very good business to be in during the hard Depression years of the thirties. The dry-land farmers in the area simply didn't have much grain to harvest. Yet my grandfather stayed afloat while other mills failed. I think it was because of his positive attitude.

I never heard Granddaddy express a word of discouragement. One thing I did often hear him say to my grandmother was this: "Get your loaf pans ready, and God will send the wheat crop."

As a child I was never quite sure what that meant, but I somehow knew that it had to do with being ready for opportunity, living expectantly. I knew it meant that God is to be trusted, no matter how bad things may seem.

Now, at the onset of another New Year, I think back over the past year. I will single out the good things that have happened, and savor them like freshly baked bread. Then I'll let the year go, and get my loaf pans ready. He will send the wheat crop! ■

—By Marilyn Morgan

he will send the wheat crop

*The New Year like a book lies before me;
On its cover two words, "My Life," I see.
I open the covers and look between —
Each page is empty; no words can be seen,
For I am a writer, I hold the pen
That'll fill these pages to be read by men.*

*Just what kind of book will my book be,
My life written there for others to see?
Each day a page written, one by one —
Will it be worthwhile when finished and done?
God, help me keep these pages clean and fair
By living the life I'd have written there.*