

Special Issue

MOTIVATED

THE MAGAZINE THAT MOVES YOU!

A SPECIAL MESSAGE FOR EID

The most
beautiful hands

The Gift of You

Gifts that are
treasured forever

Christmas is for Love

An orphan's gift

Resolved

How to keep your
New Year's resolution

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from the editor

As we enter the festive season of Eid, the feast of forgiving and considering those in need, and Christmas, celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ, and as we get closer to the beginning of the New Year, it is a good time to reflect on what lies behind us and the challenges that lie before.

At New Year, many people make resolutions and determine that they are going to change or do better in certain areas of their lives. Some resolve to form better personal habits or give up bad ones. Others decide to have a better attitude toward people and life in general. Still others set higher goals for themselves.

For those who have experienced exceptional difficulties, hardship or loss in the past year, the New Year symbolizes a new beginning and fresh hope that better times lie ahead. For those whose past year has been filled with good things and gladness, entering the New Year may be a jubilant event. And then there are those who may look forward with apprehension, wondering what the New Year may hold for them personally or for the world.

Whatever the case may be and whatever circumstances we may find ourselves in at present, we all appreciate some positive input and encouragement before embarking on the journey ahead. We hope that this special holiday issue of **Motivated** will be just that for you.

The articles in this issue have been collected from various sources. Some are reminders of those who need our love during this season. Others give tips on how to share the joy of the season and the feeling of belonging with those around us. Still others inspire faith for the future. There's something for everyone. Enjoy!—Happy Eid, Merry Christmas, and Happy New Year!

Christina Lane
For **Motivated**

Motivated Special Edition

A SPECIAL MESSAGE FOR



It has been said that there is no obstacle that enough love cannot conquer, no disease that enough love cannot heal, no door that enough love cannot open, no gulf that enough love cannot bridge, no difference that enough love cannot overcome, no fault that enough love cannot forgive. It makes no difference how deeply seated may be the trouble, how hopeless the outlook, how muddled the tangle, how great the mistake—sufficient love can dissolve it all.

Love takes on many forms. It can be shown in deeds of kindness, in concern for others, through words of love, encouragement and appreciation, and even by simply giving a smile or remembering to speak positively. Love can be the giving of our time to listen, or helping to lighten someone's load. —All these simple acts show and reassure others that we love them. Such loving deeds warm our hearts, give strength and encouragement, and renew our lives in so many wonderful ways.

There is a legend that tells how long ago in a regal mansion, there lived three fair maidens. One morning while they were in the garden adjoining the mansion, with its strong streams and blushing roses, the question arose as to which of the maidens had the most beautiful hands.

Narjis, who had tinted her white fingers while gathering the luscious strawberries, thought hers the most beautiful. Leila had been amongst the fragrant roses, and her hands had partaken of their dewy sweetness. To her they were the loveliest. Jameela had dipped her dainty fingers in the lucid stream, and as the clear diamond drops sparkled on her tapered fingers she thought her hands the most beautiful.

Just then there came a beggar girl who asked for alms. The royal maidens drew aside their rich robes and turned away. The beggar passed on to a cottage nearby, and a woman with sunburned face and toil-worn hands gave her bread. The beggar, so the legend says, was immediately transformed into an angel and appeared at the garden gate saying, "The most beautiful hands are those which are found ready to bless and help their fellowmen."

The joyous festival of Eid, the feast of giving and considering those in need, is with us once again. It reminds us all to share the gift of love and mercy with others, to lend a helping hand to those in need. May this gift grow and become stronger in our hearts and the hearts of others, and may we ourselves be blessed as we make it the focal point of our interactions with others this season. ■

EID

The most beautiful hands



You may think you have little to offer others that would make a difference in their lives, but that's not so. This list shows how you can give by bestowing on others gifts that will be treasured forever, starting with...

The Gift of YOU

—By Dee Ann Ludwig

As Ralph Waldo Emerson said, “The only gift is a portion of one’s self.” And that’s what these twelve gifts are—gifts of you. They cost nothing, but are some of the most precious presents you can give to your friends and family. Their effects can last a lifetime.

The Gift of Time

In our busy world, the phrase “I don’t have time to...” has become a universal complaint. Like a growing plant, any relationship between two people can thrive only if it receives care. Most human relationships profit from a simple tonic that is called “tincture of time.” A chatty phone call to an unhappy friend or a half-hour visit to an aunt who lives alone can mean a lot, but costs very little.

The Gift of Good Example

Most people learn fundamental attitudes and behavior by observing others. Be a good example by handling difficult situations in a mature manner.

The Gift of Acceptance

Many problems between husbands and wives or between friends begin when one person tries to change the other to fit preconceived notions. But did you know that often people begin to shed bad habits once they are accepted the way they are?

The Gift of Seeing the Best in People

When we expect people to respond in a positive way, they usually do.

The Gift of Giving Up a Bad Habit

All of us have habits that annoy those we love. What a great gift it would be if you could give up an unpleasant or unhealthy habit.

The Gift of Teaching

Helping someone you love learn something new is an important investment in his or her future happiness. Sharing our talents with others is a good way to show our love.

The Gift of Listening

Few of us know how to listen effectively. Too often we interrupt or act disinterested when someone else is talking.

The Gift of Letting Others Give

When we let others give to us, and when we accept their gifts in a gracious manner, we may be giving them one of the most important gifts of all.

The Gift of Fun

There are people who “wet blanket” the happiness of those around them, while others lead people into finding fun in ordinary events.

The Gift of Privacy

Too often we tend to smother those we love with questions and demands on their time. Each of us has a need for companionship and a need for privacy. Relinquish some of your natural curiosity occasionally and give those you love the right to private thoughts and unshared feelings.

The Gift of Self-esteem

It’s hard to resist the temptation to give unwanted or unnecessary advice and

help to those we love. Such advice may unwittingly cripple a person’s self-esteem. A Chinese proverb proclaims, “There’s nothing more blessed in Heaven than a mother, but more blessed is the mother who knows when to let go of the hand.”

The Gift of Self-disclosure

Relationships can either grow and expand, or become stale and decline. Self-disclosure—letting someone else discover more about you—can turn a wilting relationship into a flourishing one. It can also help sustain an already healthy friendship or marriage. Bottling up feelings, resentments and hopes is not only unhealthy, it also deprives others of truly knowing who you are. ♦



Christmas is...

Christmas is for love. It is for joy, for giving and sharing, for laughter, for reuniting with family and friends, for brightly decorated packages and the giving of gifts. But mostly, this season is for love.

I had not believed this until a small, elf-like student with wide-eyed innocence and soft rosy cheeks gave me a wondrous gift one year. Mark was an 11-year-old orphan who lived with his aunt, a bitter middle-aged woman greatly annoyed with the burden of caring for her late sister's son. She

never failed to remind young Mark, if it hadn't been for her generosity, he would be a vagrant homeless waif. Still, with all this scolding and chilliness at home, he was a sweet and gentle child.

I had not noticed Mark particularly until he began staying after class each day (at the risk of arousing his

aunt's anger, I later found) to help me straighten up the classroom. We did this quietly and comfortably, not speaking much, but enjoying the solitude of that hour of the day. When we did talk, Mark spoke mostly of his mother. Though he was quite small when she died, he remembered a kind, gentle, loving woman who

always spent much time with him.

As the holiday season drew nearer, however, Mark failed to stay after school each day. I looked forward to his coming and when, as the days

passed, he continued to scamper hurriedly from the room after class, I stopped him one afternoon and asked why he no longer helped me in the room. I told him how I had missed him, and his large gray eyes lit up eagerly as he replied, "Did you really miss me?" I explained how he had been my best helper.

Yes, this season
is for gaiety, mirth,
and song for good
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love.

"I was making you a surprise," he whispered confidentially. "It's for Christmas." With that, he became embarrassed and dashed from the room. He didn't stay after school anymore after that.

Finally came the last school day before the holidays. Mark crept slowly into the room late that afternoon with his hands concealing something behind his back. "I have your present," he said timidly when I looked up. "I hope you like it." He held out his hands, and there lying in his small palms was a tiny wooden box.

"It's beautiful, Mark. Is there something in it?" I asked, opening the top to look inside.

"Oh, you can't see what's in it," he replied, "and you can't touch it or taste it or feel it. But Mother always said it makes you feel good all the time, warm on cold nights, and safe when you're all alone."

I gazed into the empty box. "What is it, Mark," I asked gently, "that will make me feel so good?"

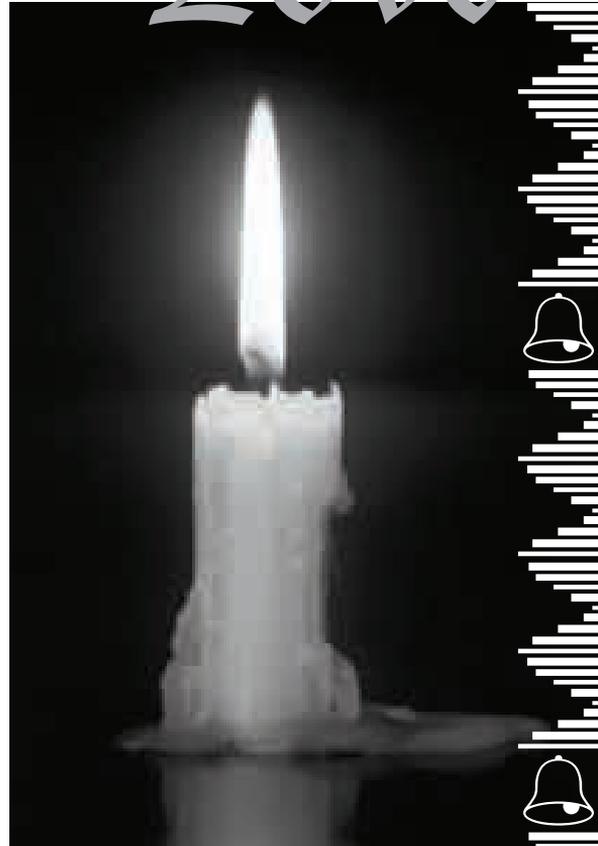
"It's love," he whispered softly, "and Mother always said it's best when you give it away." And he turned quietly and left the room.

So now I keep a small box made of wood on the piano in my living room and only smile as inquiring friends raise quizzical eyebrows when I explain to them that there is love in it.

Yes, this season is for gaiety, mirth, and song—for good and wondrous gifts. But mostly, Christmas is for love.

—*Author Unknown*

for Love





*By Jack Smith, as told to
Raymond Knowles, adapted*

A LESSON IN LOVE



The Pattern

I didn't question Ramzi, age nine, or his seven-year-old brother, Sharif, about the brown wrapping paper they passed back and forth between them as we visited each shop.

Once a year, our club takes the children from poor families in our town on a personally conducted shopping tour. I was assigned Ramzi and Sharif, whose father was out of work. After giving them the allotted four dollars each, we began our trip. At different shops I made suggestions, but always their answer was a solemn shake of the head, no. Finally I asked, "Where would you suggest we look?"

"Could we go to a shoe shop, sir?" answered Ramzi. "We'd like a pair of shoes for our daddy so he can go to work."

In the shoe shop the clerk asked what the little boys wanted. Out came the brown paper. "We want a pair of work shoes to fit this foot," they said.

Sharif explained that it was a pattern of their daddy's foot. They had drawn it while he was asleep in a chair.

The clerk held the paper against a measuring stick, then walked away. Soon, he came with an open box. "Will these do?" he asked. Ramzi and Sharif handled the shoes with great eagerness. "How much do they cost?" asked Sharif.

Then Ramzi saw the price on the box. "They're sixteen ninety-five," he said in dismay. "We only have eight dollars." I looked at the clerk and he cleared his throat. "That's the regular price," he said, "but they're on sale—three ninety-eight, today only." Then, with shoes happily in hand, the boys bought gifts for their mother and two little sisters. Not once did they think of themselves.

The next day the boys' father stopped me on the street. The new shoes were on his feet, and gratitude was in his eyes. "I just thank God for people who care," he said.

"And I thank God for your two sons," I replied. "They taught me more about love in one evening than I had learned in a lifetime." ♦

Life's
yesterdays
have passed
forever
beyond our
reach;
God has
them in His
keeping.
Leave them
there!

There is a golden day about which I never worry--a carefree day void of fear and apprehension. It is yesterday. Yesterday with its cares and worries, its aches and pains, its faults and mistakes.

Yesterday has passed, never to be recalled. I cannot undo a single act; I cannot unsay a word that I said. All that yesterday holds of wrong or right, regret or happiness, is in the hands of a God of love.

But He can bring honey out of the rock, and He can bring sweet waters out of the bitterest desert. He can turn weeping into laughter, He can give beauty for ashes, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, the joy of the morning for the woe of the night.

Yesterday is gone. It was mine, but now it is in God's hands.

—Robert Bridett

I was face down on a surfboard about half a mile off the beach. I had always wanted to try to ride the surf, but out here among these giant green swells I suddenly didn't feel very adventuresome.

"This is far enough," said the brown-skinned beach boy who had accompanied me on his own board. "Now turn and face the beach. When a wave lifts your board, paddle hard. Then stand up."

Stand up? "Tell me," I croaked, trying to keep the panic out of my voice, "what's the main thing to remember?"

"The main thing?" he repeated with a smile. "Don't look back!"

The next wave lifted the board. Ahead of me a great chasm seemed to open in the sea. The board tilted down and plunged deep into an emerald precipice that seemed almost vertical. I tried to

Don't Look Back!

A Story for the New Year

stand up. Behind me, I knew, a million seething tons of saltwater were poised above my head. In that instant I forgot what the beach boy had said—I looked back.

Well, I didn't drown. Not quite, anyway! I stayed there, floating in the ocean while my board went plunging away by itself, until finally I summoned the courage to try again.

I've always remembered what the beach boy said: Don't look back. At past mistakes. At lost opportunities. At hurt feelings. At grievances, real or imagined. No, look forward. Face forward. Concentrate on what lies ahead. That's the main thing to remember.

—Arthur Gordon, adapted
(Courtesy of Guideposts)



“Dr. Papaderos, what is the meaning of life?” I asked the aging German professor of Greek culture and history.

The usual laughter followed, and people stirred to go.

Papaderos held up his hand, stilled the room, and looked at me for a long time, asking with his eyes if I was serious and seeing from my eyes that I was.

“I will answer your question.”

game for me to get light into the most inaccessible places I could find.

“I kept the little mirror, and as I went about my growing up, I would take it out in idle moments and continue the challenge of the game. As I became a man, I grew to understand that this was not just a child’s game but a metaphor for what I might do with my life. I came to understand that I am not the light or the source of light. But light—truth, understanding, knowledge—is there, and it will only shine in many dark places if I reflect it.

“I am a fragment of a mirror whose design and shape I do not know. Nevertheless, with what I have I can reflect light into the dark places of this world—into the black places in the hearts of men—and change some things in some people. Perhaps others may see and do likewise. This is what I am about. This is the meaning of *my* life.”

Then he took his small mirror and, holding it carefully, caught the bright rays of daylight streaming through the window and reflected them onto my face and onto my hands folded on the desk.

Much of what I experienced in the way of information about Greek culture and history that summer is gone from memory. But in the wallet of my mind I still carry a small round mirror.

—Ted Cashion, *adapted*

What’s It All About?

Taking his wallet out of his hip pocket, he fished into a leather pocket and brought out a very small round mirror, about the size of a small coin. And what he said went like this:

“When I was a small child, we were very poor and we lived in a remote village. One day, on the road, I found the broken pieces of a mirror. A motorcycle had been wrecked in that place.

“I tried to find all the pieces and put them together, but it was not possible, so I kept only the largest piece.—This one. By scratching it on a stone I made it round. I began to play with it as a toy and became fascinated by the fact that I could reflect light into dark places where the sun would never shine—in deep holes and crevices and dark closets. It became a

“With what I have I can reflect light into the dark places of this world—into the black places in the hearts of men—and change some things in some people.”

Resolved

Many people start out the year promising to do this or that, change this or that, break a bad habit, or start a new one. Sometimes it works; often it doesn't. Why is that?

A man once owned an eagle, and for many years kept him chained to a stake. Every day the eagle walked around and around that stake, and over time wore a rut in the ground. When the eagle was getting old, his master felt sorry for him and decided to set him free. So he took the metal ring off the eagle's foot, lifted the eagle from the ground, and tossed him into the air. He was free—but he had forgotten how to fly! He flip-flopped to the ground, walked back over to his old rut, and started walking in circles like he had for years. No chain and shackle held him, just the habit!

There is a saying: “The chains of bad habits are too weak to be felt until they are too strong to be broken,” and that would be true if it weren't for God and His power.

You can ask Him to help you overcome a vice, bad habit, or weakness, and you will see results. He promises that whoever comes to Him, He will in no wise refuse, and that whatever you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive. You have to put your own will and possibly a great deal of effort into the transformation process as well, but with God's strength and His intervention, you'll find you have more resolve, determination and ability to change than you ever thought possible.

—David Fontaine

“You'll have more resolve, determination and ability to change than you ever thought possible.”

answers to your questions



I feel like my life has been ruined because of the deep hurt that someone caused me. What can I do to get over the pain, hurt and resentment I feel?

Someone has said, “Forgiveness is the key that unlocks the door of resentment and the handcuffs of hate. It is the power that breaks the chains of bitterness and the shackles of selfishness.”

To get rid of resentment and bitterness, the first step is to forgive—and to truly forgive someone, you have to let go of whatever it is you are harboring in your heart against that person. That may be hard to do, but you can't say you forgive but can never forget. If you continue to blame the other person, you become responsible for your own unhappiness. But once you are willing to

lay it aside, you can move on.

No matter what problems your bitterness or resentment stem from, God's love can be like a balm that heals the hurt. Even if you don't understand exactly what the problem is between you and the other person, God's love is the answer! Ask Him to put His love for that person in your heart, and it will give you a new start.

You can make it your New Year's resolution to forgive those who have wronged you, to forget the past and to move into the future free from the burden of resentment or bitterness. ♦

**What shall I wish you?
Treasures of earth?
Songs in the springtime?
Pleasures and mirth?
Flowers on your pathway,
Skies ever clear?
Would this ensure you
A happy New Year?**

**What shall I wish you?
What can be found
Bringing you sunshine
All the year round?
Where is the treasure,
Lasting and dear,
That shall ensure you
A happy New Year?**

**Faith that increases,
Walking in light;
Hope that's abounding,
Happy and bright;
Love that is perfect,
Casting out fear;
These shall ensure you
A happy New Year.**

--Francis Ridley Havergal, adapted

