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Hello, my dear friend!

It's that time of year again! Christmas is coming and it's time to start planning. How does that make you feel? Excited or stressed?



Are you anxiously waiting for the season, ready for an extra special Christmas this year? One that fills you and your family so full with the warmth of God's love you can't help but share it? Our hearts long for a sweet season filled with Christ. We dream of the perfect Christmas - a home filled with joy, laughter, and love as we celebrate the birth of our Savior. Gratitude peacefully wraps us as we remember all that He's done. Christmas lights, snowy nights, and God's presence in our homes - *that's* the Christmas we want! It will be such fun to use this little book to fill your Christmas to overflowing with Christ.

Unfortunately, for some, Christmas can be more of a season of disappointment and weariness than that of joy and peace. Maybe you've experienced that disappointment on too many Christmases and no longer dream of a perfect season. It's become just another thing to get through. Many things can cause us to either be dispassionate toward Christmas or stressed.

It can be an especially draining time when you have a child who is sick. Christmas brings with it so much to do but there's also someone precious who needs a lot of care! You are already stretched thin, and now this big holiday adds more work to your load.

Money can be stretched very tightly, and we may believe our kids (and us!) have to "miss out" on the fun of Christmas. You may be afraid you're your need to simplify Christmas means missing out on celebrating.

We also experience the clashing of lists. What does that mean? Well, our "To Do" list (the things we have to do), our "Want To Do" list (the fun things of Christmas we'd love to do), and our "Can Do" list (the things we can realistically do) don't often fit together. We need to get this and that done (like shopping), but can't because our little one isn't well enough to go out.

We'd love to take the family to something special like The Nutcracker ballet but know it's just not possible.

Sometimes, the burden of our every day "To Do" list keeps Christmas as an after thought and we find ourselves doing everything at the last minute or not at all.

Ugh! That doesn't sound like the extra special Christmas we dream of! That's the description of a stressful, even sad Christmas.

BUT, I have good news for you, my friend! It doesn't have to be that way this year! REALLY! We can create that wonderful Christ-filled Christmas we desire. You'll find that simplifying does not mean that you have to give up all the fun! It just takes some trimming and some seeking...

There's a lot of Trimming to Do...

Every year, my family goes to a Christmas tree farm to cut down our tree. Every year, as we make the drive, we say we're going to get a small tree. BUT, every year, we find ourselves hauling home the very biggest tree we could find! We then complain every step of the way as we carry it, trim off the lower branches, shove it through the door, and, finally, get it to stand somewhat straight. We also always ask ourselves, "Why did we do this again?" Why? Because, when we're finished trimming it with all of our beautiful, sweet-memories-filled decorations and light it up, it's breath taking. It's worth the effort because it brings so much joy all season that we hate to take it down. (Maybe that's also because it's so difficult to take down! 😊)

Just as we have to trim the tree to make it fit in the stand and have room for gifts under its boughs, to make our Christmas season truly special we have to trim off the excess in our schedules. We have to trim the things that rob us of our time and energy or cause us stress. Stressors are things that we don't enjoy, are extremely difficult to do, blow our money, or take up too much time.

While decorating our tree with beautiful, meaningful ornaments is also part of trimming, we should carefully decorate our calendar with activities we love. By planning well, our season can be free of stress and filled with joy.

and Even More Seeking to Be Done!

After we have trimmed, we are ready to give God our full attention. We seek to know and enjoy Christ more. We settle for nothing less than centering ourselves on Him.

We also seek a special closeness with our family. That closeness comes from preparing our hearts together to celebrate Christ's birth. It's a time of joy and excitement mixed with wonder and stillness. Some of my family's sweetest memories come from evenings quietly cuddled together blessed by all the lights and ornaments that decorate our mammoth of a tree.

That's what makes this planner unique from others you will find. It's not just a planner; it's a guide to filling your home and your Christmas with Christ.

My sweet friend, are you ready to center your family's Christmas on Christ and make the season extra special this year? I promise the effort will be more than worth it!

Enjoy the process of filling your Christmas with Christ!



In His Love,
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