

Love Letter From Lisa

12-4-17

Hello there, I sure have missed writing to you. Avoiding the distractions and busyness of life seems impossible. Even in ministry, I find it so easy to get turned away from my intimate relationship with Jesus. But here I am now refocusing and really wanting to share some thoughts with you.

First of all, I truly hope your Thanksgiving was ... well... full of THANKS. But really what I am praying for is that you find a new depth of spiritual gratification in this the season. The reason I am focused on this is because we are in the expanse of time when culture violently pivots from gratitude to insatiable materialism. In fact, it happens so quickly that stores don't even bother to stock shelves with Thanksgiving decor. Have you noticed that?

Anyway, I remember a time when the non-holiday season felt repetitive and unsatisfying. I was crazy busy but never moving forward. My kids were growing up and I felt them, my purpose, drifting away. Content was NOT the word to describe my heart. But somehow the weeks that came after Thanksgiving provided me with some sort of lift and opportunity for fulfillment.

I mean how do you describe your days leading up to December 24th?

I would pull out the boxes the day after Thanksgiving with great enthusiasm and get right to decorating. Typically, the thought of disrupting my momentum to leave the house would send me into a tizzy. I just could not wait to be done and admire my amazing handiwork. I would tell myself it was for perspective guests and for my family to feel "in the spirit". But if I am being honest, I just wanted to be like all the other super housewives. I couldn't stand the possibility of not measuring up and letting down my family. .

Then there was the shopping. I collected christmas lists and hit the malls. I would battle my way through stores trying to check off EVERYTHING. I wanted to make sure everyone felt loved by me as if that was the measure of love I was supposed to aspire to.

The stress would build as the deadline approached. Money would start to run low...more stress. And when the money ran out, the guilt swallowed me up. Did I do enough? Did I get enough? Was all the effort ENOUGH?

Then the 48 hours of holiday would come. I would sit back and watch my kids open an obscene amount of gifts, adults would sit back and compare each others shopping prowess, and none of us would attend church services because it got in the way of the "family traditions". On the eve of December 25th, I would go to bed feeling exhausted and sad.

Then it would be time to take all the decorations down and put the holiday away, As I did that I would find myself reflecting...

- My relatives disparaged my gift buying = "i am not enough as shopper"

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- The gifts my kids received found their way to a lonely corner of their room unappreciated = “I am not enough as a mom”
- The bank account is drained = “I am not enough as a household manager”
- My clothes fit tighter = “I am” you get the picture. I called it the Christmas Crash because just like that I had collided again with that feeling of loneliness and defeat.

But somewhere in the chaos of my life Jesus found His WAY into my clueless stubborn heart and became the BFF I had longed for. Someone, I could talk to about anything and He would understand. I wanted to know more about Him. Fortunately, His life is nicely chronicled perfectly in the Gospels of the Bible. That is where I found He really cared about women; women like me. I could feel Him see me. It was exciting and comforting. So when it came time to celebrate HIS BIRTHDAY, I knew I needed to change my approach to that day.

Now I will be completely transparent on this... I have had a huge battle converting my life. Mainstream culture is a powerful and sneaky adversary. It is powered by my enemy and attractive to the flesh. The messages that confront me are "hurry up", "buy more", "you are running out of time", "switch your priorities" "whoa, her house looks way better than yours" "feel crazy". Truly it's tough out there for a DISCIPLE.

So then, what should I do - cease and desist with any decorating, shopping, or cooking? Of course not. But I need to be mindful of why I am doing it and what I am representing as a Follower of Jesus. I am preparing for a Birthday Party; my Best Friend's Birthday Party. My home will be festive with His favorite things; nativity, candy canes, and lots of ILLUMINATION. Party favors will be laid out for His guests, not based on what they asked for but based on how I love them. Food will be prepared so that we might share in a time of focused fellowship. And time WILL be set aside to worship the BIRTH of my JESUS.

And instead of the annual Christmas Crash, I get experience the fullness of my relationship with a SAVIOR and a renewed desire to keep seeking more of Him.

Ladies, I pray that this time of year is full of divine connection brought on by a path pointed directly at Him; a Savior born a baby in a dirty manger so that He could lead us out of lives full of sin and sadness and into ABUNDANT JOY. And as a DISCIPLE OF JESUS, we have the beautiful opportunity to share that INEXTINGUISHABLE JOY.

God Bless You Everyone and MERRY CHRISTMAS !!!

Love,

♥ Lisa