The Christmas Gift Poem
It isn't the flowing ribbons, draped and curled with extra care, or the fine and fancy bows tied with ornamental flair.
It isn't the label on the box, the sum of money spent, or anything that shows the length to which you obviously went.
The beauty of a Christmas gift cannot be seen at all.
For the loveliness of giving is a feeling, grand and tall.
It's the genuine offer of love, the yearning to make a connection, a show of honest gratitude, a display of sincere affection.

Author Unknown
“Timeless Insights From A Father”

Several years ago, H. Jackson Brown, Jr., made a list of advice for his son when he left home for college. That list became a book entitled, “Life’s Little Instruction Book, Vol. II.” As we approach the year 2021, I hope you will reflect upon some of this father’s advice.

Never laugh at anyone’s dream.
Remember that no time spent with your children is ever wasted.
Accept a breath mint if someone offers you one.
Don’t let a little dispute injure a great friendship.
Once in a while invite the person in line behind you to go ahead of you.
Send your mother-in-law flowers on your spouse’s birthday.
Never be the first to break a family tradition.
Steer clear of any place with a “Ladies Welcome” sign in the window.
Ask anyone giving directions to repeat them at least twice.
Don’t wash a car, mow a yard, or select a Christmas tree after dark.
Hold your child’s hand every chance you get. The time will come when he/she won’t let you.
Give people more than they expect and do it cheerfully.
Someone will always be looking at you as an example of how to behave. Don’t let them down.
Be as friendly and courteous to the janitor as you are to the chairman of the board.
Don’t be so concerned with your rights that you forget your manners.
Don’t dismiss a good idea simply because you don’t like the source.
When you say, “I’m sorry,” look the person in the eye.
No matter how old you get, hug and kiss your mother whenever you greet her.
Never ask a barber if you need a haircut.
Leave a quarter where a child can find it.
Pray. There’s immeasurable power in it.

Trust in God but lock your car.
Call your dad.

My family and I extend to each of you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Pastor Newkirk
Impressions by the First Lady
Catherine White Newkirk

THE BELL
I KNOW WHO I AM
I am God's child (John 1:12)
I am Christ's friend (John 15:15)
I am united with the Lord (1 Cor. 6:17)
I am bought with a price (1 Cor. 6:19-20)
I am a saint (set apart for God). (Eph. 1:1)
I am a personal witness of Christ. (Acts 1:8)
I am the salt & light of the earth (Matt.5:13-14)
I am a member of the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:27)
I am free forever from condemnation (Rom. 8: 1-2)
I am a citizen of Heaven. I am significant (Phil.3:20)
I am free from any charge against me (Rom. 8:31-34)
I am a minister of reconciliation for God (2 Cor.5:17-21)
I have access to God through the Holy Spirit (Eph. 2:18)
I am seated with Christ in the heavenly realms (Eph. 2:6)
I cannot be separated from the love of God (Rom.8:35-39)
I am established, anointed, sealed by God (2 Cor.1:21-22)
I am assured all things work together for good (Rom. 8: 28)
I have been chosen and appointed to bear fruit (John 15:16)
I may approach God with freedom and confidence (Eph. 3: 12)
I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me (Phil. 4:13)
I am the branch of the true vine, a channel of His life (John 15: 1-5)
I am God's temple (1 Cor. 3: 16 ). I am complete in Christ (Col. 2: 10)
I am hidden with Christ in God (Col. 3:3). I have been justified (Romans 5:1)
I am God's co-worker (1 Cor.. 3:9; 2 Cor 6:1). I am God's workmanship (Eph. 2:10)
I am confident that the good works God has begun in me will be perfected. (Phil 1: 6)
I have been redeemed and forgiven(Col.1:14). I have been adopted as God's child (Eph 1:5)
I belong to God
Do you know
who you are?

Surely Christmas is one of the greatest and most joyous of ALL feasts. Let’s remember that God’s most awesome act in ALL of history began when His Son stepped into time as man. His ultimate purpose was to redeem us from sin.

Let the BELLS ring giving God the highest Praise! Hallelujah!

"Who can add to Christmas? The perfect motive is that God so loved the world. The perfect gift is that He gave His only Son. The only requirement is to believe in Him. The reward of faith is that you shall have everlasting life."
Corrie Ten Boom

Wishing each of you God's Peace and Favor!

Believe,
Lady K
Ways to Raise Your Hope During These Uncertain Times
https://thankgodi.com/ways-to-raise-your-hope-during-these-uncertain-times/
Judy K Martene
Alice B. McCoy

In preparing this newsletter, I wanted to write an inspirational article about COVID-19 without being complacent. So, I decided to search the internet to help me with my words and I found the below article. I hope these words will start you thinking of ways to deal with this pandemic.

In this time of pandemic fear, we have an opportunity to look at this monumental pause in our world and find new ways of being. We have the perfect opportunity to change our thoughts, raise our vibrations and seek higher ground. Let fear guide us to hope and belief that a new world can emerge from this chaos. So how can we do this you may ask?

There is so much stress, confusion, despair and a feeling of hopelessness in our world today. Every sector of our planet is experiencing some form of this chaos. Everything in our world as we have known it to be before has now changed and what has remained the same really isn’t the same if you look at it with new eyes. These new eyes are an enlightening and awakening of sorts that our world has changed and things will never go back to the old normal. I get it, this causes anxiety and fear in most because we need to have a new perspective, an awakening of sorts. A new perspective begins with awareness. An awareness that we truly can co-create a new beginning, a brand new start so to speak. We can start to turn things around in a more positive, hopeful way. Changing our thoughts, adding new routines on a continual basis will change our perspective which changes our perception, which changes our reality.

Here are some simple, easy ways to change your despair into hope.
1) Know that you are always being cared for by a force/energy that is creation.
2) Take some time for self-care every day. Only you know what your body and soul need to replenish.
3) Being in nature has a healing effect on your mind, emotions and body.
4) Affirmations and prayer connect you to the higher power.
5) Find something beautiful and appreciate it. When you truly open your senses, beauty is all around us, from the morning dew to the evening stars and everything in between.

When you begin to change your focus and your perspective, you build more things to be hopeful and positive about. Your life will change if you take the time to purposely change no matter what is happening in your external world.

Build your world into a happy, hopeful place and watch how things will change for you!

God’s Continued Blessings!
If Jesus came to your house to spend a day or two, 
If He came unexpectedly, I wonder what you'd do. 

Oh, I know you'd give your nicest room to such an honored Guest, and all the food you'd serve to Him would be the very best. 

And you would keep assuring Him you're glad to have Him there, that serving Him in your home is joy beyond compare! 

But when you saw Him coming, would you meet Him at the door, with arms outstretched in welcome to your Heavenly Visitor? 

Or would you have to change your clothes before you let Him in, or hide some magazines and put the Bible where they'd been? 

Would you turn off the radio and hope He hadn't heard and wish you hadn't uttered that last, loud, hasty word? 

Would you hide your worldly music and put some hymn books out? Could you let Jesus walk right in, or would you rush about? 

And I wonder- if the Saviour spent a day or two with you. Would you go right on doing the things you always do? 

Would you keep right on saying the things you always say? Would life for you continue as it does from day to day? 

Would your family conversation keep up its usual pace; and would you find it hard each meal to say a table grace? 

Would you sing the songs you always sing and read the books you read; and let Him know the things on which your mind and spirit feed? 

Would you take Jesus with you everywhere you'd planned to go, or would you, maybe change your plans for just a day or so? 

Would you be glad to have Him meet your very closest friends, or would you hope they'd stay away until His visit ends? 

Would you be glad to have Him stay forever on and on, or would you sigh with great relief when He at last was gone? 

It might be interesting to know the things that you would do. If Jesus came in person to spend the holidays with you.
Youth on the Move
Glenda D. Sandlin

Virtual School and the Pandemic

During this unsettling time, we asked the question to our youth. What’s going on? How are you feeling? and What do you think is next. Here are a few answers from our Sunday School Youth.

This year my school year has been calm. First, the year started out weird. Then, it became more fun now that I have some friends in class. My school year is going great except the whole virtual part of it. Virtual isn’t really my thing. I’d rather be in school. Hopefully, I will see my friends again. This school year has given us many challenges, such as being at home some days, and attending classes on campus on other days. This pandemic has taught us that we need to have compassion and understanding for others. Our focus as children has shifted and our worlds have definitely flipped drastically. We have to continue to lift up one another and take on all the challenges in good spirit and understand that it will get better in God’s timing.

Tatiyana and Destiynee Merene

My name is Levi Pettis and I have been enrolled in virtual school since late March 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. I did not have an 8th grade graduation in May, no school dance, zero pictures, no class trip to New York City, no church youth trip to Washington DC, no Boy Scouts classes, no ATV training and all spring try-outs for cross country were cancelled. I am in contact with friends, schoolteachers, some family and church members through Zoom, cellphone, text messages, FaceTime, Duo, Google Meets and Sony PS4 technologies. When the pandemic got creepy in April and all schools were postpone, all the churches were closed and the US government shut down the entire country, I was thinking maybe Jesus Christ is about to return or a lot of people would start acting crazy from being indoors for long periods of time. Eight months later, I am alive, still in virtual school and now a new 9th grader. I cannot try-out for cross country because the COVID-19 cases are increasing weekly. The US death toll that is on the evening news is mind blowing and I pray that God keeps all of us safe. I do miss riding the bus with my friends and lunchroom roast battles. I have been wearing white t-shirts and basketball shorts the entire time. If I go outside for exercise or run an errand with my mother, we follow the social distancing guidelines. A N95 mask, staying 6 feet from the next person and try not to touch anything. I think the pandemic is like a bad science fiction movie and COVID-19 is an alien or a deadly eating zombie. I know from home and church that this pandemic is a test and God oversees all things. I am not afraid or upset, I do believe God will make a good way through this pandemic in His time. In closing, I pray that everyone stay safe, wear their face mask and survive this test.
Join us!

Oak City Baptist Church
Youth Sunday School

EVERY SATURDAY AT 12pm for

SUNDAY SCHOOL
&
5pm for PRAYER CALL

ZOOM MEETING ID: 708 207 841
PASSCODE: 097984
I was chosen to write on one of our fellow church members which was a little difficult this time since we are in a pandemic and cannot have that one on one personal chat. Nonetheless I have the pleasure of presenting Ms. Glenda D. Sandlin. She was born in the military town of Jacksonville in Eastern North Carolina, to two loving parents, Hubert and Grace, who still reside there. They have been married almost 60 years. This is a true model of marriage.

Glenda's parents said, it was a special event that December 9th morning sooo long ago; it snowed, which was a rare occasion. Glenda has an older brother. Glenda says she is blessed to be a mother to one child whom she calls La Precious. She happened to be born the day of her grandmother's funeral and was named in memory of her favorite song, Precious Lord. La Precious and her husband, Brandon, have given Glenda two new blessings, a grandson Brayden, and a granddaughter Bryleigh. Glenda is also blessed to have a grandson Christian, who came into her family after his mother, who was her daughter's best friend, passed in a tragic car accident. Glenda also enjoys a long history with an extended family of ladies whom she calls her sisters. She has had the same best friends throughout her life from age 4, 1st grade, high school, college and beyond, with whom her friendships have turned into sisters she never had.

When asked about her involvements at Oak City Baptist Church, Glenda stated the following: “I am active at Oak City in various ministries. I have always had the desire to serve and teach our youth. I am an active member of the Youth Ministry where I co-chair and work with the most diverse and talented group of young people who bring everything, we need to have a successful ministry. I am also co-chair of BTU and work specifically with our Youth for the Wake Missionary Baptist Association (WMBA) Oratorical Contest. Oak City has been blessed to have a group of caring parents and church members who encourage our youth in this area and those wonderful youth have by far outshined many over the years. I am also an active member of the First Aid Committee, a co-teacher with Crown Ministry, a Vacation Bible school lead teacher, Communication Ministry writer for the Youth on the Move section, Awana co-teacher and an Advisor on several programs dedicated to our youth.”

Glenda stated, because of Oak City, she could be a part of a vision from a previous member who put together a Back to School Program several years ago to ensure the success of our youth.

Oak City affiliation has placed Glenda with individuals to be selected to work with WMBA as a part of the First Youth Auxiliary under Rev. Keith Hicks, where she led several programs to enhance our youth participation. She facilitated a Young Ladies Workshop
during a Women’s Ministry. Glenda also facilitated one of the Oratorical Workshops and youth classes alongside Rev. Hicks.

When asked who brought and what keeps you at Oak City Baptist Church. She stated, “Deacon Loftin asked her and Bonita Shoulders what church did they attend, and they laughed and said every Baptist church in Raleigh. We just picked one and went there each Sunday. Deacon Loftin told us that we needed to set roots down in one place and invited us to Oak City. We came and were greeted by some of the nicest members, who have since gone on to be with the Lord. However, that first encounter was enough to keep us coming back and we never searched another Sunday.”

When asked about hobbies, Glenda stated her favorite hobby is reading. She loves learning and reading God’s Word. Glenda also enjoys reading books by African Americans. She loves football season and watching Cam Newton on Sundays. Glenda was saddened when he left the Panthers, but she will always support him, just NOT HIS NEW TEAM. She does a little scrapbooking and she also loves music and dance.

This was the portion I was most interested in learning about, work life in a hospital. Glenda stated, “my life’s desires as you know is to serve and my job helps me to do just that. I have the opportunity to assist people during their time of need, whether its caring for their loved one, pulling out a crime victim from the car, standing with a love one as they are told their family member did not make it, or simply giving them the answer to questions concerning their insurance or setting them up for finical assistance; I am there.”

Regarding Glenda’s work life in the Emergency Department of the Wake Medical Center, dealing with the pandemic as a frontline worker, she stated, “My work life is not the normal work atmosphere that it once was. My day begins with my having to take my temperature two hours before reporting to work. Once I arrive, I am required to wear my facial covering and mask before I step out of the car. The only time we do not have to wear a mask is during our 30-minute lunch where there is social distancing in the breakroom. That is our only exception during our 12-hour day. We have on call days during the week under normal circumstances, we would more than likely be off. However, with the pandemic, we have been called into work every on-call day for the last 7 months when things picked up.

Our department has been under a lot of stress and we are losing co-workers rapidly. We have had a record number that were out and or hospitalized from having Covid-19. All praises to God none have lost their lives.

Glenda stated some of the public and some co-workers still do not take the pandemic as serious as she think they should. The rest of the paragraph stays the same. Even watching the numbers and sometimes patients lose his or her life, while some people still insist upon being free to go and do whatever they want citing this is a free country.

“I refer to my life and who gave everything just for me. I pray when my eyes open, before I get out of my car, all day at work and thank God when I leave for His protection over His child, me.”

Glenda’s future plans are to serve the Lord with gladness and serve His people as she continues to inspire and equip our children with His word and wisdom.

She wants to continue to work with the Wake County Public School System as a volunteer in their outreach program called Read and Feed, where she can help disadvantaged children find power and education through reading.

Glenda wants to continue working in a field where she can be that light in darkness; where she has a small moment of opportunity to show God’s love to everyone she meets while in this life.
These spiritual awakening quotes will inspire self-improvement and long-term positive change. Spiritual awakening involves moving beyond your limited reality and gaining a broader and clearer perspective. When you make the shift to a higher level of consciousness, you become more aware of reality as it exists beyond the confines of the self.

Having a spiritual awakening leads to self-realization and a well-adjusted existence. It leads you to a blissful and content life. No matter the circumstances of your life, you’ll enjoy a stress-free natural existence. Just like a butterfly emerges from its cocoon, when you finally reach that state of spiritual enlightenment, you’ll be able to spread your wings and find your true self and your true path. It will allow you to experience a sense of inner peace, a feeling of purification, and have more compassion and empathy.

Though it can be a painful process as it requires you to make difficult choices on how you move forward and live with your new perspective, once your inner transformation to a higher level of consciousness is complete, you’ll be happy that you went through the whole experience.

To celebrate the shift to higher consciousness, below is our collection of inspirational, wise, and positive spiritual awakening quotes, spiritual awakening sayings, and spiritual awakening proverbs, collected from various sources.

1) “We are all equally capable of spiritual awakening. It may not seem that way, at times. Some of us are so caught up in the drama of our day-to-day existence that we have lost track of who we really are. But eventually, all of us will make the discovery of our true nature.” – Victor Shamas

2) “You are heir to a heavenly fortune, the sole beneficiary of an infinite spiritual trust fund, a proverbial goldmine of sacred abundance beyond all common measure or human comprehension. But until you assert your rightful inheritance of this blessed gift, it will remain unclaimed and forever beyond your reach.” – Anthon St. Maarten

3) “We are not the only ones affected by our recovery. The spiritual awakening heals the world one person at a time.” – Marta Mrotek

4) “You have to grow from the inside out. None can teach you, none can make you spiritual. There is no other teacher but your own soul.” – Swami Vivekananda

5) “It is through gratitude for the present moment that the spiritual dimension of life opens up.” – Eckhart Tolle

6) “Within you lies opportunity to grow in spirit. Keep your feet on the earth, but lift your face towards the heavens. Surrender to the light with a tranquil mind, and a heart full of the love of God.” – White Eagle

7) “You can have a spiritual awakening and discover a new side of you at any age. And best of all, love can happen at any age. Life can just start to get exciting when you’re in your 40s and 50s. You have to believe that.” – Salma Hayek

8) “In the place of stillness, rises potential. From the place of potential, emerges possibility. Where there is possibility, there is choice, and where there is choice, there is freedom!” – Gabrielle Goddard

9) “Be kind to yourself as you proceed along this journey. This kindness, in itself, is a means of awakening the spark of love within you and helping others to discover that spark within themselves.” – Tsoknyi Rinpoche

10) “Thousands of candles can be lighted from a single candle, and the life of the candle will not be shortened. Happiness never decreases by being shared.” – Buddha

11) “Some changes look negative on the surface but you will soon realize that space is being created in your life for something new to emerge.” – Eckhart Tolle
12) “There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle.” – Albert Einstein
13) “The spiritual journey is the unlearning of fear and the acceptance of love.” – Marianne Williamson
14) “The spiritual journey is individual, highly personal. It can’t be organized or regulated. It isn’t true that everyone should follow one path. Listen to your own truth.” – Ram Dass
15) “Awakening is about liberating yourself from the prison that is the world of the mind and daring to be here as all that you are.” – Leonard Jacobson
16) “Your visions will become clear only when you can look into your own heart. Who looks outside, dreams; who looks inside, awakes.” – C.G. Jung
17) “Many of life’s failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up.” – Thomas Alva Edison
18) “Glorify who you are today, do not condemn who you were yesterday, and dream of who you can be tomorrow.” – Neale Donald Walsch
19) “Times are difficult globally; awakening is no longer a luxury or an ideal. It’s becoming critical. We don’t need to add more depression, more discouragement, or more anger to what’s already here. It’s becoming essential that we learn how to relate sanely with difficult times. The earth seems to be beseeching us to connect with joy and discover our innermost essence. This is the best way that we can benefit others.” – Pema Chodron
20) “Through spiritual maturity you will see new ways to avoid unnecessary suffering; wiser ways to endure unavoidable hardships with grace, and opportunities to turn your pain into lessons of service and healing for others. Your hard journey has had a great purpose! Your pain was always a part of a plan to open your heart to love. Have faith. A miracle is happening in your life; the miracle of pain is transforming you to your highest self.” – Bryant H. McGill
21) “Do not be impatient with your seemingly slow progress. Do not try to run faster than you presently can. If you are studying, reflecting and trying, you are making progress whether you are aware of it or not. A traveler walking the road in the darkness of night is still going forward. Someday, some way, everything will break open, like the natural unfolding of a rosebud.” – Vernon Howard
22) “True happiness comes not when we get rid of all of our problems, but when we change our relationship to them, when we see our problems as a potential source of awakening, opportunities to practice, and to learn.” – Richard Carlson
23) “Upon awakening, let the words Thank You flow from your lips, for this will remind you to begin your day with gratitude and compassion.” – Wayne Dyer
24) “The enlightened give thanks for what most people take for granted…. As you begin to be grateful for what most people take for granted, the vibration of gratitude makes you more receptive to good in your life.” – Michael Bernard Beckwith
25) “The spiritual path – is simply the journey of living our lives. Everyone is on a spiritual path; most people just don’t know it.” – Marianne Williamson

Spiritual awakening has many benefits. It leads to self-realization and can help you lead a blissful and content life.

When you finally reach that higher shift in consciousness and understanding, you’ll be able to enjoy a fulfilled, meaningful life. Hopefully, the above quotes will inspire you to wake up so that you live the life of your dreams and attain the success you desire.

If you wish to read the remaining quotes, visit the website: https://everydaypower.com/spiritual-awakening-quotes/
Due to the Pandemic, please check your emails and listen for announcements for confirmation or changes to traditional programs held during the year 2021.

Inspirational Words of Wisdom

Oh, love the Lord, all you His saints!
For the Lord preserves the faithful, And fully repays the proud person. Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart, All you who hope in the Lord.

Psalm 31:23-24 (NKJV)