

## Favorite Things

By Denise Chaney, Hamilton, Ohio

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"Peppermint mocha and cookies of Christmas, family gatherings full of warm wishes; Watching the pageants where all the kids sing, these are a few of my favorite things. . . ." (Sing to the tune of "My Favorite Things." Go ahead, try it. I'll bet you can come up with something!)

I was thinking this morning about some of my favorite things at Christmastime; the chill in the air; the warmth inside; time spent with my husband and son; time for quiet reflection by the Christmas tree or on a long drive; the music of the season.

There was a time in my life when Christmas was anything but peaceful. My parents were divorced; my dad remarried. There was a constant fight throughout the season as to where my sister and I would go and what time we would need to be where. Well-meaning family members would fight over us and at times, it wasn't so joyous.



When I got old enough to drive myself from place to place, Christmas became a very precious time for me, but for different reasons. I will never forget some of the drives that we had between family stops—the LORD and me. On those long drives, I learned to be thankful that I actually had a few moments to focus on the very reason we celebrate the season: Him. I treasure those talks we had. They have long since become one of my favorite things about Christmas.

It's interesting how varied our perspectives can be. Several years ago, I took a short survey of a few colleagues to learn their favorite thoughts about Christmastime.

One immediately said, "The music." And knowing him, I can believe Christmas music is one of his favorite things, period. He always has a song in his heart—and generally on his lips. In fact, if you ask him a question, many times he'll respond with a song! I think it's a gift, actually.

Another colleague shared a family tradition: On Christmas Eve if there is snow on the ground, she, her dad and sister, will take off their shoes and run almost a half a mile to the garage and back! She said it was exhilarating. Of course, this year she is six-months pregnant, so running barefoot through the snow may not be an option. Though the image it conjures is quite amusing!

Another coworker said that she loves the Christmas season, and one of her favorite things is watching her grandchildren open their presents—eyes wide, moving quickly from one gift to the next. It fills her heart with joy to see the excitement on their faces. It sure brought a smile to her face as she shared her thoughts with me.

The last associate (and now, unbeknownst to her, collaborator) gave me a one name answer: Jesus! (Way to make the rest of us appear shallow!) Not really. We all know it's where we were headed. The point is that without Him, none of us would enjoy the Christmases He has given us.

We all have different memories, both the good and the not so good, and we all have different "favorite things." They are as varied as the stars in the sky; but we all have only One to thank for Christmas:

*For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6).*

He came to save us from sin; He came to set us free from bondage; He came so that we could have a relationship with the Father; and He came *that we might have life, and have it more abundantly* (John 10:10). There is no greater reason to celebrate!

Thanks, dear collaborator, for sharpening our focus this Christmas season. No matter what station of life we are in, Christmas will always be about Jesus.

Thank You, dear Jesus. You gave so much. You laid aside everything to come so humbly, just for us. You are our favorite "Thing" at Christmastime and always.