

# Reach UP

The Magazine to Empower and Enrich Today's Woman

Winter 2017



*Faith*  
It's All in a Name

*For Me*  
Alcohol Is Not Going To Steal  
My Christmas



Our *Reach UP* team understands that the holidays can be hard for many of our readers. Because that's true, we want you to have a good opportunity for a cheerful time. So, from the first page to the last page, we've included tips and thoughts to make your holidays better.

Some of the tips will affect your brain! That's right – we're talking brain food! Some tips will help your emotions. Who doesn't want to feel some good vibes? Some of the thoughts will help you make decisions about spiritual matters, which, believe it or not, affect more than you might think.

I could go on, but instead I'm going to leave space right here for your Thankfulness List! Write it. Speak it. Sing it. Yes, your list can become a song or rap of your own thankful thoughts. It will change your life!

Thankful for you,

*Crystal Wacker Knapp*



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## Thankfulness List

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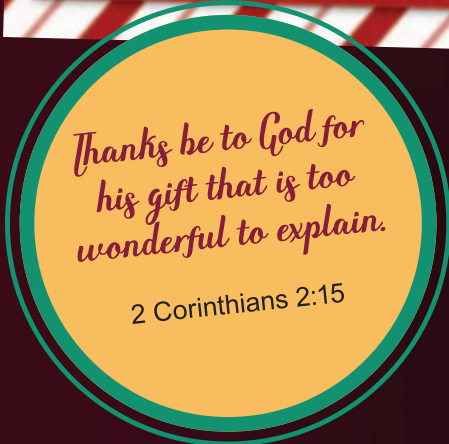
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# The Pilgrim's **SECRET WEAPON**

## Can Be Yours **Today!**

by Debbie Rutan

### **Debbie, have you had some hard times?**

*I'd say all of the "Top Ten" most stressful life experiences have knocked on my door!*

*For ten solid years it felt as if life couldn't get any worse. Our 2-year-old son was hit by a car and sustained a serious head injury. We moved with four small children to another state. My husband went back to college. On the first day of school, he hit a child with his car, causing a head injury to the child. It was too much and my husband had to drop out of school because of an emotional breakdown and panic attacks. We had financial hardship and bankruptcy. Another son was diagnosed with a bone tumor. Our daughter had an emergency appendectomy. My father died. And we moved again and started new jobs. At the worst of it, I actually contemplated ending it all...*

### **What changed?**

*I experienced divine intervention when God stopped me from running my car into a tree.*

### **Really? What was going on?**

*I was so depressed and scared, overwhelmed. One day while driving alone on a country road in Indiana, I thought, "Just drive into that tree and end this." But as my tires left the pavement and hit the gravel, all at once I felt a strong tug on the steering wheel — pulling me back onto the road. It wasn't me ... I believe it was God! I was very shaken afterward yet also filled with a sense of awe and peace.*

*Since then there have been many other challenges to face. However, during those ten years of intense stress, I came to the end of myself and stopped asking God, Why? Instead, I began to practice the power of thanking God for anything and everything I could honestly feel thankful for. It changed my outlook, adjusted my feelings, and truly saved my life.*

**S**ometimes life is hard. Things happen: loss of a job, home, friend or loved one; inability to pay the bills; a betrayal; a sickness or addiction. Serious things overtake us that can discourage and overwhelm us. The Pilgrims also had it rough. They went through great hardship sailing across the vast ocean to find a new life in a wild and uncertain land, only to face more challenges trying to survive there. How did they persevere and flourish?

The Pilgrims had a secret weapon. It was the power of "thank you." Every day they would begin by thanking God for life, freedom, safety, and opportunity in the new world. Yes, there were plenty of things going wrong, but by digging deep into their hearts, the Pilgrims found even more to truly be thankful for. Their attitude of gratitude gave them inner strength, and God blessed them by sending the Native Americans to provide food and help in planting crops and building a new life.

I also use the secret weapon of thankfulness throughout the day, thanking God for everything large or small: my hearing, sight, physical abilities, faith, family, friends, food, blue sky — the list goes on and on. It's quite amazing to experience the transformation as my mind and emotions find hope and peace instead of focusing on my problems!

In the New Testament of the Bible (Philippians 4:8) we are encouraged to think about things that are **"true, honest, pure, lovely, of good report, with virtue, and praise-worthy."**

Try it for yourself. Start your own "thank you" list today. It will become your secret weapon against discouragement and despair. It simply works, and God will bless your life as a result.



be  
thankful



**C**hristmas can be a wonderful and spiritual celebration for some families, but for many families of alcoholics, it can be a time of deep despair and loneliness.

My alcoholic dad never got the memo that at Christmas you focus on kindness and rejoice at the Savior's birth. My dad was too busy turning his hand toward his bottle. It never occurred to him to spend his time creating memories with his family. Yes, the Alcoholic Grinch stole Christmas in my house every year until I left home.

The beauty of Christmas never took the spotlight in our home because my dad's temper tantrums were so full of drama. Other families listened to Christmas carols, but my dad would be yelling loudly at us. Christmas wasn't any different from any other day for me. My dad was too far gone to notice it was a special holiday for worship and thanksgiving. Instead he'd keep a running list of all my failures, and then remind me on a regular basis.

Once, one of my hairs fell into the sink and he went ballistic when he noticed I forgot to remove it. He then proceeded to repeat all my mistakes from the past year. My "normal" was to listen and take to heart all his critical put-downs. As a result, I felt like a failure and never good enough.

## ALCOHOL IS NOT GOING TO

STEAL

## MY CHRISTMAS OR ANY OTHER HOLIDAY

by Babs Kincaid



(Not true and don't let that kind of stuff into your heart!)

Christmas is supposed to be a happy family time of laughter and joy exchanged within the home. But for me it was isolation and blues. My dad was unavailable to connect with me or my mom. Often my dad would threaten to take back one of my favorite Christmas gifts to tightly control my behavior. It seemed my mom didn't have time for me because of the problems my dad was making. In time Mom became his enabler and his drinking buddy. I felt like the lost child. My dad couldn't and wouldn't connect. My mom kept being sucked into actions that left me alone.

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*You are worthy of a special  
Christmas experience.*

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The Prince of Peace had been born, and all I knew was that my stress level of fear, guilt, and shame had gone through the roof. The Christmas season did not give me a get-out-of-the-hot-seat ticket from my dad, so I remained sad and angry. The gift of new life in Christ was absent from my Christmas experience. I knew God existed, but He wasn't in my painful life. The Light of the World had come and I was still sitting in the dark.

If you've walked in my shoes, I bet you can relate to my sense of defeat and darkness.

So how do you do more than survive the troubled days of Christmas with an alcoholic (or with another challenging person or a tough circumstance that hurts your heart) — and actually live?

**Understand that it is possible for you to build up your own soul and enjoy the majesty**



**and love at Christmas.** You are worthy of a special Christmas experience. Christmas is a personal gift from your heavenly Father, and He longs to connect with you and draw you closer to Himself, even if every family member doesn't.

God will answer your humble prayers to have a fulfilling Christmas. You may not be able to change what's happening around you, but you can take care of yourself by doing some positive activities.

To me, the most important action is to receive the gift of salvation which Jesus brought at Christmas!

Beyond that, there are things to do and free events to attend that will lift your spirit and encourage your soul. Consider doing some of the following activities:

- ✓ **Attend a musical Christmas program at a local church**
- ✓ **Attend church on Christmas**
- ✓ **Make some homemade cards and give them to family and friends in your building**
- ✓ **Try making the nativity project in this magazine and tell someone the story of Jesus' birth**
- ✓ **Read as much as you can about alcoholism so you can pray for your family member's healing**
- ✓ **Pray to find a friend with whom you can pray regularly for your alcoholic family member**

For our readers in prison, if these activities are available, join in!

- **Exercise**
- **Attend chapel services**
- **Join training or leadership classes**
- **Attend or Start a Bible study in your dorm**
- **Read the Christmas story in the Bible and tell it to a friend**



My story did have a happy ending. Later in life a friend told me the true meaning of Christmas. My friend told me my Heavenly Father wanted to have a personal relationship with me. *"If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved"* (Romans 10:9). I was ready to become a follower of Christ. I prayed a simple prayer and I became a member of God's forever family.

Let your Heavenly Father heal your broken heart. God "heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds" (Psalm 147:3). The best gift you can give yourself is salvation. Jesus said, *"I came that they may have life, and have it more abundantly"* (John 10:10).

God took my anger and gave me His love. God took my sorrow and gave me His joy. God took my fear and gave His faith.

Christmas is a picture of God making the grand gesture of reaching out to you. Your honest response can change your life forever!

## KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

### *Reading Resources*

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***The New Codependency***  
by Melody Beattie

***Just the Facts Alcohol***  
by Pamela Richards, M.Ed.

***Let's talk about Alcohol*** by Sarah Leveté

***Alcohol and Drug Abuse*** by Jillian Powell

***What You Need to Know About Codependency*** by Al Septien

***When Someone in the Family Drinks***

***Too Much*** by Richard C Langsen

***Alcohol*** by Jen Green

***When Someone You Love is Addicted***  
by Jessica Hanan

# BRAIN

by Janey White, MS, RDN

# FUEL

Look at the list of energy boosting foods.

How can you add them to meals you already make? How about adding tuna to a tossed salad?

Be creative!



Holidays are an extra busy time of year, and sometimes it feels as if we're running out of energy. So whether you've added more activities to your day or you are just going about your normal day, fall is a great time to stock up on some brain fuel to keep you going!

Give your kids nuts instead of chips as an after-school snack.

Choosing foods with healthy fats and protein can help boost mental focus and keep your energy level up. That's why we call those foods brain fuel. Healthy fats are a key nutrient for brain health. Good choices typically come from plants and fish. Some examples would be olives, olive oil, nuts, seeds, avocados, tuna, and salmon.

Protein-rich foods help keep your energy level stable and keep you from crashing between meals. Things like meat, eggs, poultry, fish, beans, nuts, and seeds are all protein-packed foods.

As the pace of life picks up, it's a great time to cook bigger batches of food and reheat leftovers throughout the week to get healthy meals in.





# IT'S ALL IN A Name!

by Debra "Debbie" Patchen

*You will become pregnant,  
give birth to a son, and  
name him Jesus.*

Luke 1:31 GW

**W**hat is Luke 1:31 quoting?

Why, Old Testament prophecy!

This is the chosen time! And Scripture

tells what the Son of God will be known as — the sweet name of Jesus.

Naming a child has always been important. That name becomes the future identity of the child who receives it.

When I was born, my parents picked out a trending name for me, Debra. But it means **a bee!** My nickname became **Debbie**, a name I did not like.

To me it meant, "Honey, you who sting!" **Debbie** felt bitter and sour, if not shameful!

As I went through life, I came to think that my name might be true of my character.

Here's why. I pierced the heart of Jesus with the things I did wrong. I stung Him with my words and I hurt him with my actions.

In my sinful condition, I desperately needed a Savior. But God in His unending grace already had everything covered.

Naming a child in Bible times was somewhat different than it is in our day. The Hebrew (Israeli) people called each person with a single name. Then they added the father's or grandfather's name. The movie **Ben-Hur** is

*The time is coming — God's Decree — when I will keep the promise I made to the families of Israel and Judah. He will run this country honestly and fairly. He will set things right.*

Jeremiah 33:14 MSG

*A child will be born for us.  
A son will be given to us.*

Isaiah 9:6a GW

a great example. The main character is Judah Ben-Hur. Judah (first name) Ben (son of) Hur. Names revealed a great deal of information back then.

And for God, not just any name would do when it came to His beloved Son, the Firstborn of all creation.

In fulfillment of prophecy, God commanded (before the child was even conceived) that His son would be named *Yeh-SHU-ah*, meaning Jesus.

Jesus is a name that contains the promise of salvation. That means salvation from hell, yes, but also healing, preserving, protecting, and prospering.

Not only did He take away our judgment of being guilty (Romans 1:8), but He also brought you over to God's side and put your lives together! (Colossians 1:22)

Jesus did it all! The only thing you have to do is believe God's Word!

Not only will He save you from eternal hell when your body dies, He has the power to save marriages where love no longer exists. He has the power to save a drunkard. He can save a war veteran with post-traumatic stress disorder. He can save the woman addicted to drugs (prescription or otherwise). He can save the prostitute and the homeless wanderer. There is no one too bad or too far gone for God's reach.

Oh my dear, He can save you from \_\_\_\_\_.

You fill in the blank with whatever it is you think God can't do, because I can assure you, He can!



Here's a simple Christmas craft you can do with your children (or make for your own personal space) to remind you that we celebrate the birth of Jesus at Christmas.

### YOU'LL NEED:

- ✓ **3 empty toilet paper tubes**
- ✓ **White paper**
- ✓ **Scissors**  
*(children's safety scissors work fine)*
- ✓ **Colored pencils, markers or crayons**
- ✓ **Cotton ball**
- ✓ **White glue, glue stick, or double-stick tape**
- ✓ **Empty cracker or cereal box**  
*(for background if desired)*

Cut two pieces of white paper the length of the toilet paper tube and about 2¾ inches wide. Draw the Mary and Joseph figures on your paper and color them as you like. Glue them to two of the toilet paper tubes.

For the manger, cut one of the tubes in half lengthwise. Trim those halves to a length of about 2¼ inches. Glue those two pieces together as shown to create the manger.

On the white paper, color a rectangle about 1½ x 2¼ inches with a brownish-



yellow color or plain yellows shaded with brown.

Draw the baby Jesus figure about 1¾ inches long and color in the features. Cut out both the baby and the hay rectangle, making jagged edges for the hay.

Glue the hay into the manger. Glue a

small piece of cotton to the center of the hay, and glue the baby to the cotton. You've completed all you need for your Nativity.

If you like, cut an empty cracker box into a simple stable shape and color it a little for background.

When you make this with your children, take time to read aloud the Christmas story from Luke 2:1-20 in the Bible. Through the whole Christmas season, your simple little Nativity can be a reminder that Christmas is Jesus' birthday, and that we are celebrating the amazing way that God made Himself known to us by sending His Son to live with us.



Given to you by: