

“A Cup of Christmas COCOA”

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Matthew 2: 11, “On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh.” (NIV)

One of the things I adore about the holiday season is hot cocoa. Who doesn't feel warm and snuggly while sipping on a steaming cup of cocoa with marshmallows or whip cream piled on top? The word '**COCOA**' can be used to help us remember the important aspects of Christmas, reminding us of the happiness and warmth we can enjoy being a part of God's family.

C – CHRIST

Matthew 1:18 This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ is the reason for the season. Remember to spend as much time searching for God's truth, as you do searching for that perfect gift. Christ IS Christmas - there is no Christmas without Christ. During this season, share the gift that Christ has given you with someone else.

O – ORNAMENTS

1 Peter 3:3 Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. Do you spend more time fretting over whether or not your house could be featured in the holiday edition of Southern Living, than whether or not your inner spirit is adorned with God's love and compassion for those in need? Put a stronger focus on blessing others this holiday season.

C – CHEERFULLY CELEBRATE THE SEASON

Proverbs 15:13 A happy heart makes a face look cheerful. But a sad heart produces a broken spirit. As the gift list grows, the budget drains, and the calendar fills, it is easy to get discouraged. And although Christmas is meant to be a joyous season, many people also struggle during the holidays with depression and discouragement. Despite the reasons that you might feel discouraged during this time of year, focus on how much you are loved as a dear and precious child of God. The holidays are merely a season, but God's love and compassion for His children is permanent. Now that is something to celebrate!

O – OVERJOYED not OVERWHELMED

Matthew 2:10 –12 The shepherds saw the star, and they were overjoyed – they were overcome with delight, awe, motivation, encouragement, love for God – they were overwhelmed with the gift of life. Think of a time when you were overjoyed- the birth of a child, a graduation, a wedding, a beautiful sunrise, sparkling white beaches, a baptism. Your feeling of happiness was likely so overwhelming, that tears filled your eyes, you had a lump in your throat, or your heart was beating rapidly. For many Christmas-a-holics, we are overjoyed when we kick off the holiday season, but overwhelmed by the middle of the month! Try to find ways to remind yourself each day of December to be thankful for the birth of our Savior and overwhelmed by the blessings that have been bestowed upon you, rather than being overwhelmed with your holiday to-do lists or personal issues.

A – ABUNDANCE

Jude 2 ...mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance.

Whenever I think of Christmas morning, from my childhood to the present, the word ABUNDANCE comes to mind. As soon as the sun rises on December 25th, until it sets in the evening, we are bombarded with an abundance of presents, candy, baked goods, fruit, and other delectable foods. But these things are temporary. What we really yearn for is the abundant life promised to us in God's word. Our true heart's desire is for mercy, peace and love, not just on Christmas day, but every day throughout each year.

The next time you are in the mood for a hot cup of steaming cocoa, I pray that you will be reminded of this devotion. As the warmth of the cocoa trickles down your throat, allow the warmth of God's love to pour into your heart, and then pour that love out abundantly onto others.

My Prayer For Today:

Dear Lord, thank You for giving us the gift of your Son, so that we could have eternal life with You. Please help us not to get so caught up in the earthly celebrations of Christmas that we forget to celebrate Christ. Grant us joy and peace this season and into the future. In Jesus' Name, Amen.