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FREE, LAST MINUTE CHRISTMAS GIFTS

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What, you ask, is this possible? Free? Last minute, even without activating Amazon Prime Two-Hour Delivery? Yes, it is true. Yes, it is possible. And I have experience with this - as the receiver, the giver, and the observer. And this is for all of you, homes and congregations, who strive to live into God's greatest gift, that cost us nothing and cost God everything.

Ready?

Here are some suggestions!

Smile. Yes, that thing you do with your face, that opens the receiver to feel they are seen, cared about, and welcomed.

Hold open the door that extra moment, so that the one behind you can get in. It is such a modest action, but signals that the person is seen and their ability to get in out of the cold is facilitated.

Hold the elevator, so that the person rushing to ride with you can, in fact, do that.

Let a person with fewer items or a frazzled appearance go ahead of you in the checkout line at the grocery. It costs you a moment or two and rescues a person who is frantic from seasonal frenzy.

Smile at the person who doesn't look like you, speak the same native tongue you do, or share an ethnicity with you. It says we all belong to one, big, beautiful, diverse family of God, who created all of us in love and then sent us to love one another, as God in Christ has loved us.

Call someone with whom you have lost touch and reestablish that connection, catch up, and reaffirm that friendship.

Stop by the assisted living, nursing home, or memory care facility that now houses a former neighbor, colleague, family member, or friend. Even if the connection seems tenuous, remember that bringing joy in this moment is a gift.

Go out your door and thank those who have delivered your mail, picked up your trash or recycling, or brought your packages all year.

Engage with the person who regularly rings up or bags your groceries and wish them the blessings of this season.

Pause long enough to smile or say an encouraging word to a parent whose child is having a tough time shopping or leaving the play area. Tell the parent that they are doing a good job and that this age and stage will not last forever.

Find a parent who is demonstrating great patience and good will with their child and tell them that they are making all of the difference.

At church, thank parents for bringing their children to worship. Let them know that this is the way we all learn how to worship God and that you appreciate their hard work, because this is how your church family is supposed to look!

Pray for the unlikely ones - the one who cuts you off in traffic, the

one who took your parking space at church, the one who was curt or rude. They need your prayers ... and so do you. Thanks be to God, Jesus did not come just for the well behaved and already kind.

Invite a lonely neighbor over for a visit. Play Christmas carols. Don't rush.

And rest in the knowledge that God loves you beyond anything and everything ... and that is what the Christmas season is really about ... receiving God's gift of love and passing it on.

Christmas blessings,

Marilyn

Links to learn more!

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This is the perfect opportunity to call or email Marilyn

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