

FINDING THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT

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'Writer's Corner'

Here it is, days before Christmas, and I haven't hung a wreath, decked a hall or baked a single Christmas cookie. 'I'm out of sync with the season of joy and good will.

I'm still searching for that festive feeling that will propel me to open the box of last year's Christmas cards and start sending greetings to those generous souls who still remember to send me cards and pictures. I could at least replace the welcoming, artificial wreath on the door with the artificial Christmas wreath I've been using for much too long.



Sin keeps ambushing my pans to START DOING BETTER. For instance, every time I let my temper override my judgment and start mouthing off at someone, assuring myself heatedly, "I know I'm right and I'm glad I said what I did. You have to tell people off sometimes – it's for their own good, and on and on," God whaps me upside the head and makes me feel like an insect that needs to be stomped on. I learn once again that I'm often wrong and He always gets it right.

Grocery shopping is a necessary chore, but this time of year, it's like walking through a mine field of temptation. I've been carefully dieting for several days – well, two or three days – but every time I look at the scale, the devil points out gleefully that the dad-gummed thing hasn't dropped back an ounce anyway. It cut deeply into my resolution to keep eating sugar-free Jell-O for the evening treat.

Still, I was in diet-mindset when I walked the grocery store aisles filled with chocolate meringue pies, four-layered frosted cakes and giant candy bars and almost made it out without buying a single sweet. The, at the last minute, Satan struck. I snatched up a box of Little Debbie frosted cakes and checked out fast.

I could hardly wait to get home and rip open the box. My son came over to help me unload the heavier bags and noted dryly as he put the box on the counter, "Well, I see you got some Little Debbie cakes." I didn't bother answering; just waited impatiently for him to leave so I could eat one. They come in separately wrapped pairs and after eating the first two; I lost it completely and devoured the whole box. It's called an eating disorder. But when reason returned, I realized that Gluttony is one of the Seven Deadly Sins – right up there with Pride, Envy, Anger and the rest. Another bummer.

It wasn't until I glumly opened the mailbox and removed the usual pack of catalogs and junk mail that things began to look up. There was my first Christmas card of the year that

I almost threw into the recycle bin. The note inside reminded me again that in spite of all our failures, these yearly rituals remind us what Christmas is about; the real Good News that changes everything – the coming into the world of our Savior and Lord.

I'm sticking live greenery into that dead-looking wreath this year and I've already written and mailed four cards. Losing weight isn't so hard. It's just a lot easier after New Years.

*Read more 'Writer's Corner' at" <http://www.ajlambert.com>