

New York Times Best Selling Author

JEN HATMAKER



— 7 DAYS OF —
CHRISTMAS



The Season of GENEROSITY



For promotional purposes only.

New York Times Best-Selling Author

JEN HATMAKER



— 7 DAYS OF —
CHRISTMAS



A Season of Generosity

 **Abingdon Press**
Growing in Life, Serving in Faith

For promotional purposes only.

7 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

A SEASON OF GENEROSITY

Copyright © 2019 by Hatmaker Partners, LLC

Published in association with Yates & Yates, www.yates2.com.

All rights reserved.

No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or by any information storage or retrieval system, except as may be expressly permitted by the 1976 Copyright Act or in writing from the publisher. Requests for permission can be addressed to Permissions, The United Methodist Publishing House, 2222 Rosa L. Parks Blvd., Nashville, TN, 37228-1306 or emailed to permissions@umpublishing.org.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data has been requested.

ISBN 978-1-5018-8827-4

Scripture quotations are taken from the Common English Bible,
copyright 2011. Used by permission.

All rights reserved.

Interior Design by Dexterity, in collaboration with Linda Bourdeaux

Cover Design by Micah Kandros

19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26—10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

MANUFACTURED IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

For promotional purposes only.

The background is a light beige or cream color, scattered with numerous gold stars of various sizes and several gold Christmas ornaments. Some ornaments are solid gold, while others have a shimmering, glittery texture. The stars are also in various sizes and some are hollow, some are solid. The overall aesthetic is warm and festive, typical of a Christmas-themed religious poster.

To Jesus.

Long lay the world in sin and error pining, until you
appeared and the soul felt its worth.



*“Nearby shepherds were living in the fields,
guarding their sheep at night.
The Lord’s angel stood before them, the Lord’s
glory shone around them,
and they were terrified.
The angel said, “Don’t be afraid! Look! I
bring good news to you—wonderful,
joyous news for all people.
Your savior is born today in David’s city.
He is Christ the Lord.”*

—LUKE 2:8-11

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION: A NEW SEASON	VIII
CHAPTER 1: KITCHEN	16
CHAPTER 2: FASHION.....	38
CHAPTER 3: STUFF.....	62
CHAPTER 4: STREAMING.....	86
CHAPTER 5: TOSSING.....	110
CHAPTER 6: SPENDING	138
CHAPTER 7: STRESSING.....	164
FINAL HOLIDAY THOUGHTS.....	192
MY FAVORITE SOURCES	194
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	196
ABOUT THE AUTHOR.....	199

INTRODUCTION

A New Season

People want to talk to me about tons of things when they meet me in public. I field plenty of questions about really, really important stuff like homemade pizza dough, surviving middle school programs, chicken maintenance, and Gilmore Girls. I am obviously here to serve the world with my special knowledge, so I am always happy to oblige.

But if I had to choose the one venture folks still want to hash out with me, it is all things related to my book *7: An Experimental Mutiny Against Excess*. The little project that could maintain life and energy year after year. People are fascinated. They kind of want to try it. They did try it and want to tell me about wearing the same pair of leggings for a month. They are curious about what stuck in our family, what we still practice.

If it seems I am talking in code, here is the short-hand version of *7*: plagued by my own sense of unchecked excess, lazy consumerism, and careless waste, I invited (read: forced) my family into a seven-month experiment to tackle seven areas where we were spinning out of control: food, clothes, spending, waste, media and technology, possessions, and stress. All seven areas marked by too much, too selfish, too consumed, or too unhealthy. How much did we spend a month? I had no idea. How many hours were we wasting on screens? Not sure, but it felt like a lot.

So in the spirit of a fast, a temporary restraint on our appetites for spiritual connection, we dialed down our choices in each area to just seven, one month at a time: only seven foods for a month, we wore the same seven pieces of clothes for a month, spent money in only seven places, adopted seven green practices, eliminated seven forms of media and technology, gave away seven things we owned a day, and practiced the “seven sacred pauses”—seven scheduled daily moments of specific prayer and meditation.

Spoiler alert: it changed our lives.

We didn't really know how it would all go, of course. It seemed bananas or, as my friend said, *eccentric*. Turns out we were an unregulated mess in every area, so taming the chaos while committing to learn, study, press, evaluate . . . it was like drinking from a fire hose. There was a great deal we didn't know about conservation and

x



labor supply chains, local economics and stress-induced anxiety, technology brain patterns, and sustainable farming. Do you see what I'm saying? Scratch the surface and you end up down the rabbit hole of best practices in the textile industry. I pulled up my chair to the table of dozens, maybe hundreds of experts, practitioners, spiritual leaders, and global experts and finally got my head around my place in creation, in community, and in culture.

Interestingly, the actual 7 experiment, taking into account seven months of real time practice plus a few



weeks in between for processing and writing started in January and ended on Thanksgiving. Exactly one month was left out of its gaze: December. For a project focused on consumerism and excess, *December now seems like a very strange season to leave out*. I didn't do this on purpose, but I never applied the principles of 7 to the month in which Americans spent \$721 billion dollars last year. The month in which we get swept up, caught up, and jacked up. The month in which one of my children who shall remain unnamed described his Christmas disappointment like this: "Why can't I just get a horse?"

So with great anticipation, I put this delicious book in your hands as we all steer our ships into a season spiritually marked by great tenderness but economically marked by great excess. It is the strangest dichotomy. We all feel it. I do. You do. We have a strong sense that the tail is wagging the dog, but with near constant propaganda from every conceivable angle, it

is a sincere challenge to jump off the crazy train and reclaim one of our holiest seasons.

But if the results of the rest of 7 are any indicator, we actually have great control over how we celebrate Christmas and thus how it affects our families, communities, and hearts. We are not helpless victims of Black Friday. We are not stuck spending more than we have. We don't have to hand over our Christmas joy to culture. We can reclaim its beauty, reinvent its rhythms, restore its delight. We are in charge of our own lives! It is more than possible to experience a Christmas season focused on connectivity and love and generosity and Jesus, the greatest joy to the world.

Some of this book pulls from the original 7 content, so those of you who read the book will recognize a few parts, but the main content is finally filling in what the source material left out: Christmas. What a delight to take the lessons of 7 and apply them to this season!

There is so much goodness here. My hope is that you are able to join hands with the dearest people in your life and celebrate in freedom. We have permission to leave the most exhausting, draining parts of Christmas behind and grab onto all its joy, all its wonder, all its magic. Jesus is enough, as it turns out.

One last note before you dive in: I have given you tons of ideas, activities, and suggestions for a meaningful Christmas, and the worst thing in the world would be interpreting them as a checklist. On the contrary! These are only options; pick what works for your family. Pick the easiest one. Pick the funnest one. Pick your favorite one. Pick the one that works. Pick the one you like. Pick the one that gives you back some sanity. No Christmas shame here! Never! These are meant to restore the season, not add to its pressure. Steer your own ship! This month is yours to make beautiful.



So welcome to 7 *Christmas!* May it set you free to celebrate in a manner worthy of a King who came to us not on a throne but in a manger. Who chose shepherds as His witnesses and the sky as His choir loft. Who came in the simplest forms to the simplest people and still managed to save the world. Jesus, Lord at thy birth.



You've celebrated, decorated, and cooked your way to holiday exhaustion and you're hitting your limits on more than just your plastic this season.

Inspired by best-selling author Jen Hatmaker's breakout book *7*, *7 Days of Christmas* is for every jingle-bell sweater-wearing, Michelin-rated casserole-making wife, mother, sister, and friend.

Following the original seven categories from the book *7*—kitchen, fashion, stuff, streaming, tossing, spending, and stressing—Hatmaker shares stories and quotes from holidays past, along with a few simple ideas for replacing excess this Christmas.

In a season where retail stores display Christmas in August with constant pressure to manufacture joy, *7 Days of Christmas* will encourage readers toward a little less hustle and busyness in exchange for a little more family, laughter, and generosity.

Cover design by Micah Kandros

 **Abingdon Press**
Growing in Life, Serving in Faith

RELIGION / Holidays / Christmas & Advent US \$21.99

ISBN-13: 978-1501888274

9 781501 888274  52199 