

Contact: Audra Jennings
Liffuse Publicity Group
Phone: 903.874.8363
audra@liffusegroup.com
@liffuse

14820 Greenwood Ave N
Shoreline, WA 98133
www.liffusegroup.com



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - September 29, 2017

PRESS RELEASE

Have you invited Jesus to His party?

Melissa Spoelstra helps readers make over the Christmas season and celebrate with purpose



(Nashville, TN) – In the bustle of the Christmas season, it can be easy to get swept up in all of the things to do: decorating, cooking, socializing, and shopping. However, it is important to pause and remember the priority should be to spend time celebrating Christ's birth and not forgetting to invite Jesus to His own party. In **Total Christmas Makeover: 31 Devotions to Celebrate with Purpose** (Abingdon Press/October 3, 2017/ ISBN 9781501848704/\$16.99), **Melissa Spoelstra** provides a practical approach for helping families learn what it means to truly celebrate the Savior.

"A total Christmas makeover doesn't mean scrapping all your holiday traditions or adding ten more to your list. Instead, it is a personal time of reflection to evaluate how your Christmas practices align with some biblical concepts of celebration," explains Spoelstra. "Passover, festivals, and feasts were instituted by God to help His people remember who He is and what He has done. While we have no such specifics given for

our celebration of Christ's birth because it comes from church history rather than biblical mandate, we can glean some important principles about celebration from Scripture."

As Spoelstra studied the Book of Numbers while writing her Bible study on the topic, she noticed three elements included in the festivities and began thinking about how she could apply them to her personal Christmas celebrations. She shares those revelations with readers and devotes a section of the book to each:

- **Ritual:** Special activities out of the ordinary routine were planned to help remember what God has done.
- **Relationships:** Time spent together preparing special foods, eating, gathering in holy assembly, and explaining traditions to children.
- **Rest:** Regular work set aside for planned times of celebration and rest from activity to allow for reflection on God.

The 31 reflections in *Total Christmas Makeover* focus on prioritizing the rituals, relationships and rest that will draw readers nearer to Christ while celebrating His birth. Each reading contains key scriptures, thought-provoking questions to ponder, as well as practical ideas to implement, helping to reimagine the holiday and then prepare for the year ahead. Mindfully taking the time to listen to how God continues to speak through the Gospel narratives centered around the birth of Jesus provides encouragement and revelation concerning the love of God and His wisdom for us today.

Christmas is far more than a celebration of an event from long ago or a modern holiday centered around shopping. However, that doesn't mean the gift-giving aspect of Christmas doesn't have meaning. "The wise men brought gifts, and Jesus is the greatest gift to us," reminds Spoelstra. "Giving gifts is a tradition to remind us of our generous God. Dialoguing about the tradition of gifts and taking time to include our families in being generous to others help realign us in remembering the greatest gifts usually aren't bought in a store. People, peace, contentment and forgiveness are all gifts. Shopping for a needy family, reading about missionaries and starting traditions of gratitude help us rediscover the joy of giving and receiving."

A Christmas makeover doesn't mean changing all traditions and habits throughout the holiday season to completely adopt new ones. However, it might mean prioritizing the traditions pointing to Christ's birth, rediscovering the intent behind treasured practices, or incorporating new rituals to help share God's message of love.

Advance Praise

"Christmas is meant to be cherished and celebrated, not barely survived due to stress. *Total Christmas Makeover* will help you focus on Jesus, directing your heart to the loving Savior who came to earth. With many practical applications, your Christmas season will become much more meaningful and rich after reading Spoelstra's book."

~ Arlene Pellicane, speaker and author of *31 Days to Becoming a Happy Mom*

"Are you tired of just letting Christmas happen at your home — and praying merely to survive? No more! Now you and I can be absolutely intentional about embracing all the fun, faith, family and friendships of this amazing holy season. Melissa Spoelstra's *Total Christmas Makeover* gently guides us through everything seasonal around music, food, scripture reading, extended family gatherings, serving and especially how to rest in the midst of it all."

~ Lucinda Secrest McDowell, author of *Ordinary Graces* and *Dwelling Places*

"How many times I've said, 'This Christmas I want to keep my focus off of presents and onto His presence, off of the craziness and onto the stillness, away from commercialism and nestled in the arms of God.' Melissa Spoelstra has given us the perfect 31-day companion to make this desire a reality."

~ Laurie Polich Short, author of *When Changing Nothing Changes Everything*

About the author



Melissa Spoelstra is a popular women's conference speaker, Bible teacher and writer who is madly in love with Jesus and passionate about helping women of all ages to seek Christ and know Him more intimately through serious Bible study. She has a deep, abiding passion for studying God's word and teaching others to do the same.

Spoelstra holds a Bachelor of Arts in Bible Theology from Moody Bible Institute and enjoys teaching God's Word to diverse groups and churches within the body of Christ. She is the author several Bible studies, including *Numbers: Learning Contentment in a Culture of More*, *First Corinthians: Living Love When We Disagree*, *Joseph: The Journey to Forgiveness* and *Jeremiah: Daring to Hope in an Unstable World*. She is also the author of two books – *Total Christmas Makeover: 31 Devotions to Celebrate with Purpose* and the Mom's Choice Award-winning *Total Family Makeover: 8 Steps to Making Disciples at Home*. (All available from Abingdon Press at AbingdonWomen.com/MelissaSpoelstra).

Spoelstra describes herself as a small-town girl from East Texas, but she now resides Dublin, Ohio, with her church planter/pastor husband of more than 20 years and their four children.

To keep up with Melissa Spoelstra, visit melissaspoelstra.com. You can also follow her on [Facebook \(AuthorMelissaSpolestra\)](#) and [Twitter \(@MelSpoelstra\)](#).

Suggested interview questions

- Some people thrive on the holiday season while others dread it. What factors differentiate the enthusiasts from those who would rather skip the holidays?
- What is a total Christmas makeover?
- How do you approach the Christmas season differently now than you did five or ten years ago?
- Since the Bible doesn't expressly instruct us to celebrate Christ's birth, is it OK to mix the more secular elements of Christmas in with the religious aspects of the holiday?
- As long as you make sure everything you do is Christ-honoring in some way, is there anything wrong with going "all out" for Christmas? Looking at the opposite end of the spectrum, is it OK if you don't do anything special to observe or celebrate Christmas?
- For those who feel like Scrooge or the Grinch (most definitely secular characters) around Christmas, what kind of self-examination should they do?
- What are some of your family's favorite traditions? How have they changed throughout the years?
- Is *Total Christmas Makeover* intended to be used as a family devotional or for the adults read and apply to their family time each day?
- So much of the Christmas season is centered around the giving and receiving of gifts. How can we make over our approach to gift-giving to be more Christ-focused and meaningful?
- During the busyness of the holiday season, in what ways can we focus on relationships and valuing others?
- The third section of *Total Christmas Makeover* focuses on rest. How are we supposed to work rest into December? Isn't rest what January is for?
- In what ways can rest mean different things for different people?
- The 31 devotionals go beyond Christmas day. How do you transition readers into preparing for the new year ahead?

To request a review copy of *Total Christmas Makeover*, to schedule an interview with Melissa Spoelstra or for more information, please contact Audra Jennings, audra@liffusegroup.com.