
Step Out of the Christmas Box and S.t.r.e.t.c.h.

By Karen M. Pina

We just launched Gifts Ordained by Direction 2006 gift certificate holiday offer. It seems like the real meaning for celebrating the birth of our King diminishes each year, so this offer is a little different this year.

So if you were thinking, "Where's the nativity scene, the Christmas clipart, and some traditional red and green in this holiday offering?" OR saying, "C'mon is this a holiday offering or not?" Well, for those of you who know us, you know we are often just like our Big Brother, Jesus. We break man-made rules and traditions so the captives can go free. We challenge you to do the same and *s.t.r.e.t.c.h* in your giving this year so your family, friends, co-workers, and ministry partners can receive what they really need.

This is our gift to you, and we pray it stretches you and renews a fresh vision of celebrating our King. *S.t.r.e.t.c.h.* means *start thinking about real, eternal transformation for the children of heaven!* The acronym was inspired from Mark 3.

In Mark 3, Jesus spots a man with a withered hand. He calls the man forward. Immediately, the Pharisees try to trap Jesus by asking him if it is appropriate to heal on the Sabbath Day. He replies, "Is it right to restore and provide wholeness on the Sabbath or let him die?" This silenced the Pharisees.

Jesus was deeply hurt because their minds were closed and they were indifferent to human need. He told the man with the withered hand to *stretch out his hand* and he was healed. This is just one of the times in scripture Jesus was moved with compassion to heal. What about your time to demonstrate compassion....perhaps this Christmas?

Symbolically the Sabbath is a set-aside day of worship. So is Christmas. Therefore, in this sense, Christmas is equal to the Sabbath Day. So, Jesus is asking us on this day of celebration, "Will you *s.t.r.e.t.c.h.* out, restore, and provide true wholeness to those around you, or keep to the traditional ways of celebrating?"

As was Jesus' custom after performing miracles, he withdrew far away from the crowd. Many followed him because the fame spread throughout the land that he had healed many. As a result of this, Jesus told the disciples to keep a boat ready nearby for him to escape the crowds so they wouldn't fall, brush against, or try to grab him/his clothes. Mr./Ms. leader, I wonder when you go out in public, is a car kept running as a result of how many unwhole people you have helped?

He's calling all leaders to rise up in His authority and set the oppressed free. Don't worry about those who think you've lost your mind. They thought the same about Jesus. Truth be told, they may be thinking that about me for this invitation to a fresh, different way to celebrate Christmas. Who cares?

I love this passage of scripture as it tells us our true family members are those who do what God wants. In other words, when you do what God wants, you are my family. I admonish you to do what God wants you to do this Christmas. Truly, your mother, brothers, and those in your circle will be blessed. For surely those who do what God wants are His true family!

As leaders we have to watch ourselves very carefully to ensure we aren't operating in a Pharisaical approach to ministry. This approach sticks to traditions and man-made rules at the expense of keeping others in bondage. What are you loving in this...God's people or the rules?

Step out of the Christmas Box of rules and traditions this year, and obey Jesus' command and *s.t.r.e.t.c.h.* out your hand.

The gift certificates we offer are just one way to bring wholeness through the gift of coaching. There are many ways to bring wholeness. Whether you buy a certificate from us or not, this year choose gifts with real, eternal value. God wants us to *s.t.r.e.t.c.h.* out and provide healing and eternal transformation for the children of heaven this Christmas. What may be a *s.t.r.e.t.c.h.* for you may not be a *s.t.r.e.t.c.h.* for me at all, and vice versa. I need to *s.t.r.e.t.c.h.* out in giving through exercising the gift of healing even more. So let me know if you want to receive prayer for divine healing anytime during the month of December, even on Christmas Day, and I'll make sure you receive prayer for divine healing.



Living in tender wisdom,

Karen M. Pina
GOD's Coach