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One Holy Night

by J. M. Hochstetler



About the Book

On this bleak Christmas Eve God has in mind a miracle. As on that holy night so long ago... in a world torn by sin and strife... to a family that has suffered heart-wrenching loss... there will be born a baby...

One Holy Night retells the Christmas story in a strikingly original way --- through the discovery of a baby abandoned in the manger of a church?s nativity scene. Destined to become a classic for all seasons, **One Holy Night** deals compassionately with the gritty issues of life --- war and violence, devastating illness, intergenerational and interracial conflict, addictions, and broken relationships. This moving inspirational story will warm readers? hearts with hope and joy long after they finish reading.

Discussion Guide

1. Frank?s experiences fighting the Japanese in WWII left him with a deep hatred of all Asians. He refused to forgive the evils he encountered during the war. Although his attitude is understandable given the circumstances, was it fair? Why or why not? Who was harmed the most by the hardness of his heart?

2. When Frank decided to be baptized, do you think he was consciously trying to make a bargain with God? Identify the errors in this type of thinking. What does the Bible tell us about God?s sovereignty?

3. Frank disowned Mike for marrying a young Vietnamese woman. What effect did his actions have on Maggie and Julie? How did they choose to treat Frank, and why? Ultimately, what effect did their response have on him?

4. What does the Bible tell us about judging others and refusing to forgive when we are wronged? What judgmental and unforgiving attitudes do you hold against certain racial/ethnic groups or against individuals who have directly harmed you in some way? What might Jesus say to you? What might he ask you to do?

5. In Chapter 11, Julie?s Bible study group was studying Ephesians 5:22-33. After reading this passage, do you agree with their conclusions? Why or why not? How does Paul?s charge to women to submit to their husbands make you feel? What do you think he really meant?

6. When Dan encountered temptation in Chapter 12, how well do you think he handled the situation? Should he have been more sympathetic to Mrs. Webster? Look up scripture passages about dealing with temptation. What Bible character dealt with serious temptation in a similar fashion? Identify the spiritual weapons Jesus used to overcome Satan?s enticements when he was tempted in the wilderness.

7. When Olivia?s ex-husband overdosed on drugs, she chose to be at his bedside when he died, in spite of the pain his abandonment had caused her. She offered comfort to his parents and even to the woman he had been living with. Why? What was the outcome of her decision to forgive and to reach out to them with God?s love?

8. Why do you think Frank reacted as he did when Maggie and Mike died? Attempting to bargain with God can lead to deep disappointment and disillusionment when God doesn?t act as we think God ought to. Think of a time you felt God didn?t hold up his side of the bargain in relation to your expectations. How did you feel? What did you do?

9. The consequences of Frank?s rejection of Thi Nhuong shattered Frank, but also opened his eyes to his own sin. Have you ever had a similar experience that brought you in humility to the foot of the cross? What changes have you seen in your life as a result? How is your relationship with God and with others different now?

10. Were all of Frank?s and Julie?s questions answered at the end of the story? What conclusions did they draw? Have you had experiences in which your questions weren?t all answered, but you found God?s presence sufficient nevertheless?

Author Bio

J. M. Hochstetler writes stories that always involve some element of the past and of finding home. Born in central Indiana, the daughter of Mennonite farmers, she graduated from Indiana University with a degree in Germanic languages. She was an editor with Abingdon Press for twelve years and has published three historical novels. DAUGHTER OF LIBERTY (2004), NATIVE SON (2005), and WIND OF THE SPIRIT (March 2009), the first 3 books of the *American Patriot Series*, are set during the American Revolution. She is also the author of a contemporary novel, ONE HOLY NIGHT (2008) a modern-day retelling of the Christmas story. Hochstetler is a member of American Christian Fiction Writers, Advanced Writers and Speakers Association, Christian Authors Network, Middle Tennessee Christian Writers, and Historical Novels Society. She lives with her husband near Nashville, Tennessee.

Critical Praise

J. M. Hochstetler makes another mark on Christian fiction with ONE HOLY NIGHT, a moving and inspirational tale of family, love, war, prejudice, and heart-wrenching loss. Though I'm not usually interested in stories set during the Vietnam war, I quickly became caught up in the lives of Hochstetler's characters and felt their joy, pain, and struggle to either hold tight to their faith or open their heart to God. Warning: The deeper you journey into this painfully honest tale, the more you'll need a ginormous box of tissues close by. Very recommended!

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