



PUTTING
JESUS
IN THE SEASON

CHRISTMAS MORNING MADNESS

When discussing the challenges of Christmas falling on a Sunday for individuals and families, we've peeled back a conflict that exists every year between worldly expectation and spiritual necessity. As Christians we're called to live a life of worship and honor the Lord in all we do. Christmas, and every other holiday on the calendar, is no exception. In fact the goal of honoring our Lord should be at the forefront of how we celebrate Christmas.

That being said, there is sometimes an urge to over-spiritualize those things that are simply fun, thinking that it will be more pleasing to God. While the intention is good, Jesus didn't spend every moment of his worldly ministry directly preaching. There were plenty of times Jesus and his disciples were simply enjoying the good things of God's creation. The same can be said with how we approach Advent and Christmas traditions.

We should enjoy the little things, be present, carry an intentionality in all things, do our best to not get bogged down by worldly expectations, and instead build in times of reverence. All pressures of the season (spending the most money, buying the right things, having the coordinating pajamas for that photo) need not be given space to. After all, the story of Jesus coming to earth in the humblest of ways paves the way for a celebration devoid of pretense, and instead one filled with simple worship and joy.

If you've followed this conversation to this point you're probably thinking "alright, so, what do I do with all that?" The first and foremost thing you can do is pray! Pray that God would help you discern what exactly you should do to best guide your family. The second thing you can do is consider incorporating some more reverent traditions alongside the jingle bells.

LORD JESUS,

WE COME TO YOU TODAY ASKING THAT YOUR HOLY SPIRIT WOULD GUIDE US DURING OUR PREPARATIONS FOR CHRISTMAS. GIVE US SPACES TO HEAR YOUR VOICE EACH DAY. GIVE US WHO CARRY MANY BURDENS, REST AND A JOYFUL ANTICIPATION. GIVE US ALL A SPIRIT OF THANKFULNESS FOR THE MANY GIFTS YOU BESTOW UPON US AND THE GREATEST GIFT OF ALL, JESUS. AMEN.



TRADITIONS TO CHERISH

OUR GOAL: HAVE A HEART OF GRATITUDE FROM CREATING SPACE IN THE DAY TO HONOR WHAT JESUS HAS DONE, AND GOD'S PROMISES BEING FULFILLED.

BIBLE STUDY

Try reading through the book of Mathew and the book of Luke to compare the similarities and differences in the stories of Jesus's birth.

FASTING

Denying our physical bodies sustenance so that we may partake in spiritual food is one of the many ways the Bible recommends to help us draw closer to God.

GENEROSITY

Generosity can come in many forms from supporting mission partners, giving gifts to Christmas specific charities, or even buying gifts to connect with your neighbors. Not sure what to choose? Ask God what He would have you put your resources to first.

PRAYER

Make a prayer list for people or organizations who you want to partner in prayer with this season. Take time to offer prayers of gratitude throughout the season.

CANDLES

Advent candle traditions exist across denominations with varying methods. The purpose of them is to build anticipation for the coming light in the darkness- Jesus.

ATTEND A CHURCH SERVICE

Due to the way our calendar cycles this may not be possible every year. When Christmas does fall on a Sunday, and a service is available, choosing to make attending a priority can be a great way to lead your family by putting Jesus at the forefront of the day. To do this might require some adjustments to your regular Christmas schedule. Here are some practical ideas for how to honor God while keeping Christmas morning jolly:

Some Gifts Can Wait: One way to make space on Christmas morning is to delay the present opening. If we're teaching our children that Jesus is the absolute best gift they could ever receive, why would we allow Him to be overshadowed by Legos and Tinkertoy's? As parents though, that can feel like a killjoy, as we enjoy giving good gifts, and enjoy seeing the excitement (and the appreciation for our midnight wrapping). A good way to meet in the middle would be to have your children open one gift (stockings etc.) then delay the rest. Perhaps have their stockings filled with fun things to bring to church service.

Streamline the Cooking: It wouldn't be a holiday without someone sweating in the kitchen...or would it? Consider making some of your festive dishes something that can be prepped in advance and not complicated.

Simplify: Remember when we discussed not getting bogged down with worldly expectations? Christmas morning is very susceptible to worldly wants and comparisons to creep in. Perhaps commit not to get on social media for the day. Embrace the gifts and joys given to your family, without carrying the weight of comparisons. With that comes the freedom to do as much or as little as you choose.

A NEED FOR PARENTAL LOVE AND GUIDANCE IS ONE THAT LASTS OUR LIFETIME. WE SEEK THIS FROM EARTHLY PARENTS, SPIRITUAL PARENTS, AND OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN. IF YOU'RE IN A SEASON WHERE YOUR CHILDREN ARE NO LONGER RACING DOWN THE STAIRS IN FOOTY PAJAMAS, OR MAY EVEN BE TRYING TO DEVELOP TRADITIONS WITH THEIR OWN BURGEONING FAMILIES, DON'T UNDERESTIMATE YOUR ABILITY TO SPIRITUALLY DISCIPLE THEM THROUGH THIS SEASON. CONTINUE TO ENCOURAGE WISDOM AND PRIORITIZATION, AND BE AN EXAMPLE OF HOW TO PUT JESUS FIRST.



TO:
PARENTS OF THE GROWN
AND FLOWN
1116 FURY'S FERRY RD.
EVANS, GA 30809

HAVING ONE ANOTHER TO LEAN ON IS ONE OF THE MANY BLESSINGS OF MARRIAGE, AND A NECESSARY ONE WHEN MANAGING HOLIDAY TRADITIONS, EXTENDED FAMILY, AND CREATING A JOYFUL ENVIRONMENT FOR YOUR CHILDREN. WE WOULD ENCOURAGE ALL COUPLES TO SIT DOWN AND MAKE A GAME PLAN OF HOW YOU MIGHT CARRY THESE BURDENS EQUITABLY THROUGH THIS SEASON.



TO:
COUPLES OF 1116
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