

STOP TRYING TO HAVE A PERFECT CHRISTMAS

The way we celebrate Christmas reveals a great deal about us. Our society celebrates in a huge way, and we get swept along with the hysteria. Somewhere along the way, we realize the radical commercial nature of what is going on and the ways the society secularizes it with phrases like “Seasons Greetings” and “Happy Holidays.”

Pretty soon, Christians get upset and start proclaiming religious sounding slogans like “Keep Christ in Christmas” and “Jesus is the Reason for the Season.” What is sad and a little revealing is that many Christians insist vocally about the religious nature of Christmas, then proceed to celebrate it just like the world.

By and large, we take our cue on how to celebrate Christmas from the culture around us.

We try to spread a thin veneer of Christ-centeredness to it, but be honest, except for a few Bible verses or a manger scene, Christmas morning at many Christian homes won’t look all that different from any other house in America.

Probably the most important way that Christmas has become commercialized is through instilling in us all the things that make for a “perfect Christmas.” Watch any Christmas special, and I guarantee you that a major plotline will revolve around someone “ruining Christmas” for a group of people. We feel such pressure to get it right and to have the perfect experience for ourselves or for our children. But nothing could be further from the true Christian understanding of what Christmas is about.

Christmas is about God interrupting our plans.

What are some of your biggest frustrations at Christmas? Are they connected to your expectations? Why or why not?

Christmas is about realizing that our best laid plans never quite fulfill us and always leave us wanting more. Christmas is about how God comes to us when we least expect it, intervenes in miraculous ways, and takes our lives in unexpected directions.

Nothing could be further from the true spirit of Christmas than trying to have a perfect Christmas. Christmas is about celebrating what God has done in history and what God continues to do in the present. He interrupts our plans. He redirects our plans. He calls us to something different than what we were expecting, something which, if we will trust Him, will fill us with joy and wonder over His plan which is grander than ours and which is coming true in our midst and which He calls us to be a part of.

So don't try to have a perfect Christmas this year. Instead, celebrate the way God has interrupted other people's lives for their good and His glory, and look for ways that God is trying to interrupt your life and call you to something you might never have imagined.

What are your favorite Christmas traditions?

What are some Christmas traditions you do NOT look forward to?

What are three ways you can make Christmas gospel-centered this year?
