



An **EMOTIONAL**
Christmas

Introduction

While Christmas is doubtless a blessed and joyful time of year, the true meaning of the Advent season is often lost in the shuffle of shopping, planning, and gathering. Too often we let the ups and downs of daily living cloud our hopes and extinguish our joys. This series is designed to help us recognize both the anxieties and the joys that come with Christmas. This is a time of year that should be devoted to the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ, and not to the stresses that so often accompany Christmas.

Our hope is that this series will help each of us overcome the anxieties and loneliness that can be such a burden during this time of year; and, instead, show how to truly celebrate the wondrous occasion of Jesus' birth. As we travel through this series, let us take note of the obstacles that can get in the way of our joy – loneliness, anxiety, and even a worldly view of joy – and how we can transform stresses into times of worship and true unity in Christ. Take time this Christmas to gather with family and friends and grow closer to Jesus through this guide and have a blessed and merry Christmas.

The Importance OF
FAMILY WORSHIP

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God--this is your true and proper worship. – Romans 12:1

Worship! Who knew one word could mean so much? If you look it up in the dictionary, it would say something like; “the feeling or expression of reverence and love for a God.” That’s a pretty good definition, but I think we want something more practical.

True worship is God-focused worship. People tend to get caught up in where they should worship, what music they should sing in worship, and how their worship looks to other people. Focusing on these things misses the point. God wants us to live for Him; He wants us to be a living sacrifice for Him. On one occasion in the Bible, David made a point to say that he could not even worship if it cost him nothing. Worship is giving everything back to God, for He deserves all the praise. Jesus tells us what true worshippers look like:

**God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.
– John 4:24**

In Spirit and in Truth. The Spirit in whom we worship is the Holy Spirit, whom Jesus has given to those who believe in him. The Truth in which we worship is the identity of Jesus as the Son of God. Family worship is so important because it unites the family together around one purpose, honoring God.

I remember as a kid my parents would make time for us to have devotions together. We would study a verse or two, then talk about that verse, and share something that was

going on in our lives. We would also have a “memory verse” that we would work on throughout the week. I learned to put God’s Word in my heart that way...and it’s still with me today! Kids can worship just as well as adults, and sometimes better. There is no Jr. Holy Spirit. Kids come to Christ just like adults do.

I think in this day and age, we get so distracted, so easily. Have cell phones taken over our lives? Has Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat and Be Real taken the place of our family worship? We’ve got more time-saving devices in the 21st Century than any other age, yet we have less time. Is it because we binge-watch Hulu, Netflix, Disney, Paramount, and ESPN instead of worshipping the one who spoke the World into existence?

“God wants worshipers before workers; indeed the only acceptable workers are those who have learned the lost art of worship.” – A. W. Tozer

DISCUSS

- What does worship mean to you?
- What keeps your family from worshipping together?
- Are there things you need to remove to give you more time to worship together?

PRAYER

- Dear Lord, we love you and we want to be faithful worshippers of You. Please remove the obstacles in our lives that keep us from committing our time, talents, and treasures for you.

ACTION

- Try putting your phones on the counter or on silent for 1 hour every day, while you worship together.
- If married, consider switching places with your spouse in the nightly tasks and routines, allowing them more devoted time for worship.

PRAISE

- Try to have a time of worship in song together. Turn the TV off and sing some of your favorite worship songs, listening to the words and what they mean for your worship.
- Find out about each person's favorite artist, do their lives reflect true worship?
- Find an old hymn you like and see if you can find the story behind the hymn.