

Holiday Gifts & Traditions:

“Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights...”
James 1:17 NIV

A harried woman and her children were ending their day of holiday shopping. To express her frustration and stress, she stated that whoever created Christmas should be strung up and shot. A bystander brought to her attention that someone had already crucified him. Before you get caught up with your tasks, lists, and expectations, put them into perspective. Ask yourself what you should be celebrating: the hectic, stress-laden, financially burdened holiday season, or the gift of peace and hope.

Even though God gives us all we need for a healthy, happy life, we tend to disturb it by “spending” and “observing” the holiday on human terms. Look at the holiday traps that take up your time. Categorize your holiday tasks as “need to do,” “should do,” “want to do,” and “expected to do.” Which ones really address the Christmas spirit? Just because you are invited to attend an event or have habitually participated in an activity doesn’t mean you have to continue that activity. Prioritize all of your activities. By weeding out those that distract you from the true meaning of Christmas, you will find less stress and more enjoyment from your choices.

Advent is a time for hope, peace, joy, and love, not mounds of gifts, chaotic rounds of parties, or copious amounts of food. Consider what has real meaning for you. Is it the Christmas story you heard as a child or its impact on you as an adult? Think about the music of the holiday and how a stirring rendition of “Joy to the World” or a quiet performance of “Silent Night” displays love and peace in a harried world. Don’t let commercialism or stress overshadow the gifts of love and sharing that you offer your loved ones. Remember the spirit of Christmas, share your presence with others, reduce your stress, and create meaningful traditions that demonstrate God’s love.

(Source: www.webMD.com)

References / Resources:

www.charity.org/ - Global Impact, organization catering to charities world-wide

www.nyredcross.org/page.php/prmID/482 - holiday safety issues from the New York Red Cross

www.safety-council.org/info/home/xmas_fire.htm - holiday safety

http://kidshealth.org/kid/feeling/friend/gift_giving.html - gift tips for kids

www.gotquestions.org/Christmas-gifts.html - answers gifting questions from Biblical perspective

www.umc.org/site/c.lwL4KnN1LtH/b.1355371/k.9501/Spiritual_Gifts.htm - spiritual gift inventory – for other denominations search Google for spiritual gifts