

## Don't Let Christmas Cripple Your Christianity, Part 1

Despite the fact that modern mainstream religion mistakenly makes Christmas a religiously significant holiday, the “most wonderful time of the year” can actually be very debilitating to our Christianity. Examine how Christmas can hinder our service to God.

Christmas can cripple our commitment to Christ. **Matthew 6:33** says we must seek first God's kingdom and righteousness. However the trappings of Christmas celebration, even a nonreligious observance like mine, can severely hinder our commitment to Christ and His people if we are not careful.

Consider two very important attacks on our Christian commitment during this time of year—attacks on our time and on our money.

Perhaps another Christmas carol should be written to more accurately describe this holiday: “It's the most busiest time of the year.” I know that doesn't have the same happy ring to it, but it is more truthful. We have extra cooking, extra company, work gatherings, church gatherings, kids' Christmas plays and concerts, visiting family, traveling, shopping, and so much more. In December, we barely have time to turn around.

With this hectic pace, we may procrastinate in prayer and delay Bible study. We certainly do not have time to teach others the gospel, which is regrettable since this is one time of year when most people are receptive. Some do not even have time to assemble with the saints. We must make the most of our time in December as with the rest of the year (**Ephesians 5:16**). Do not let Christmas cripple your time commitment to the Lord. Remember, when this month is over, when all the guests leave, when all the presents have been opened, there was only one thing necessary during this time as well (cf. **Luke 10:41-42**). That one thing is drawing near to Jesus. In our haste to point out that any celebration of this holiday should be nonreligious because there is no biblical authority for a religious observance of Christ's birth, we must not forget that during every day and every season our number one goal is to draw closer to Jesus.

The second attack is on our money. Because of the expenditures which accompany our American Christmas celebration, many Christians turn their wallets away from Christ. They have so overspent on gifts and food that they have to cut back somewhere. Sadly, because creditors call us expecting money and elders don't, contribution is one of the first things to go. Sometimes it is not just December's contribution, but the whole year's. For those who take out Christmas loans, their next year's contribution is taken up making monthly payments on last year's Christmas.

Of course, this time of year does provide a golden opportunity. **Hebrews 13:16** says, “Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God” (ESV). If we think beyond ourselves and our family, we can use the gift-giving atmosphere of this holiday to make sacrifices, sharing with others in need, helping and caring for those less fortunate than we are.

There is nothing wrong with spending a little extra on presents and food during this time of year. But we are still to be good stewards of God's blessings, managing them wisely to God's glory even in December (**Luke 16:11**).

**I Corinthians 9:27** is great advice during this time of year. We need to buffet our bodies daily, bringing them into subjection. That is, we must constantly remind ourselves of our commitment to Christ and not allow anything, not even Christmas, to cripple that commitment. Don't let Christmas cripple your Christianity.