

# The Bulletin

## Meeks St. Church of Christ

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December 8, 2019

### **“Some Do’s & Don’ts Of The Holiday Season”**

By Brian Meade

The Christmas season of shopping and decorating comes around every year at this time. And there’s a lot of good memories that are made with all the festive fun that goes along with this season. But there are also some dangers and pitfalls that need to be addressed as we rush into the holiday season. There is a lot that Christians can celebrate in Christmas, but there is also a lot we cannot.

I don’t want to be the conscience for every child of God, nor can I be. And I am aware that there are a lot of positions that Christians hold on whether or not one can celebrate, in different or varying degrees, Christmas at all.

For example: some believe it is wrong to put up a Christmas tree in one’s house this season, while others do not hold that view. I am not going to weigh in too far in that area, but I will say that I believe it is a matter of individual conscience concerning how one celebrates or refrains from celebrating the Christmas season. I have no problem with those who do not participate in Christmas, and will not ask them to violate their conscience in this regard.

Paul says some things in Romans 14 about such matters, when he says, *“One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind.”* (Romans 14:5) And also in Romans 14:14, *“I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but to him who thinks anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.”* Having said all of that, I hope to look at some areas that is clear for us to see if what we do violates Bible principals and morality— then it is wrong for us to do so. We cannot stop being a Christian for any reason, in any season!

But here are some suggested Do’s and Don’ts:

#### **1. Do Have Fun & Enjoy The Christmas Holiday.**

There is much one can do enjoy this time of the year. There are the seasonal Christmas cookies, candies, and treats that parents and kids decorate only this time of the year. Christmas lights, decorations, and displays are everywhere, as the sights and sounds of Christmas makes for a joyful atmosphere.

Not to mention the songs of Christmas like “Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer,” “Frosty the Snowman,” “Santa Claus is Coming to Town” (my favorite version is by Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band)... and many other classics old and new play constantly on the radio. And for some reason, folks are generally nicer and more congenial this time of the year. As you can tell, I really enjoy this season! And there is a lot of secular fun we can have!

#### **2. Do Get Together With friends And Family This Christmas.**

Getting together with relatives from near and far is a BIG part of the good times of Christmas. This may be the only time relatives come in from other states to visit and celebrate together. And this season becomes a somewhat nostalgic time when you think of love ones and parents who are no longer with us, but we keep and treasure the memories of the times together with them.

Families will often share meals and desserts of all kinds together and have conversations around the dinner table. It is often an opportunity to talk of spiritual conversations and what God has done for us throughout the year — as we always should, all year round! Some of my best conversations with family members and friends have



started from what people assume Christmas is all about— Jesus’ birth. I have taken the misconception, and gone farther into what Jesus wants and expects us to do in following Him. You can even make an opportunity for evangelism out of this time spent together— what would be better than that?

### **3. Don’t Make A “Holy Day” Out Of The Christmas “Holiday.”**

As I brought up the misconception about Christmas in the last point, some will say, “Jesus is the reason for the season.” This is from the Catholic tradition of celebrating Jesus’ birthday as a holy day. We have to remember NOT to do anything in “will worship” to God that He has not given us to do. The Bible says nothing about celebrating Jesus’ birth as a “holy day,” and if He wanted us to He would have given us how to do it in the Scriptures (1 Peter 4:11; Col. 3:17).

December 25, is not the actual date that Jesus was born in Bethlehem. It is a date chosen by man to designate a “man-made tradition” that violates what the Bible says about making up our own traditions and binding them on men (Deuteronomy 4:2; Proverbs 30:6; Acts 15:24). To bind Christmas as a holy day would be just as wrong as the Pharisees in Matthew 15:1-9, who bound the tradition of the elders on men. Jesus said of those Jewish traditions, “*But in vain do they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.*” (Matt. 15:9)

### **4. Don’t Celebrate With Dissipation This Holiday Season!**

Paul told the Ephesians, “*Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is **dissipation**, but be filled with the Spirit,*” (5:15-18).

The word **dissipation** is described as: “*recklessness, debauchery, wildness.*” It is what Paul describes what being “drunk with wine” is in verse eighteen. It is also described as a “work of the flesh” in Galatians 5:21, and Paul even says of “*those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*” People of the world look to alcohol and drugs as a way to celebrate in general, but also Christmas and New Year’s Eve especially.

The only “spirits” God wants us to be filled with is the Holy Spirit (see Eph. 5:18 again). May Christians Not follow the world’s mold of how to celebrate with alcohol in any season! Christians, beware of this worldly danger (Rom. 12:1-2).

### **5. Don’t Become Selfish Or Materialistic This Time Of The Year.**

It pains the hearts of followers of Christ to hear of deaths and injuries related to the Christmas rush/frenzy to compete for deals on material goods offered by merchants. But every year at “Black Friday” I shudder to have to be anywhere near a department store just after Thanksgiving. This is a major argument against the Christmas holiday and one problem we could do without!

Selfishness and materialism can be a temptation, but with all temptations there is a way to escape (1 Corinthians 10:13). Selfishness is the reason people will fight over getting what they want, and why they will push and shove others out of their way! These occasions can be training us to covet those who get bigger and better stuff than us. We must guard our hearts (Proverbs 4:23; 1 John 5:21) against such wickedness.

### **6. Don’t Overspend and Hinder Your Finances.**

Another common danger of this time of the year is that of overspending on Christmas gifts. Merchants make it so easy to do this with offers with credit cards and deferred interest, but soon after all the gifts are exchanged— the bills come due! Families can be seriously hindered by the strain on their finances— all because they overspent on Christmas! The Bible teaches us to be responsible and act with wisdom in all we do. Solomon once said in Proverbs 22:7, “*The rich rules over the poor, And the borrower becomes the lender’s slave.*”

We must remember to keep our obligations to provide for our families (1 Timothy 5:8), and even more importantly, our obligation to God (1 Corinthians 16:1-2). We must not rob God of what is rightly due to Him, just so we can spend more on our gifts to each other! (Malachi 3:8)

### **7. Do Remember To Be Thankful For What You Have And Be More Ready To Give Than Receive.**

It is ironic that Thanksgiving is right before the Christmas shopping season. But to me, I enjoy Thanksgiving more because it doesn’t have all the materialism connected to it. Christmas gifts should be more about what I can give to others, rather than what others can give to me.

One of the saying of Jesus peculiar to the apostle Paul is found in the very simple statement, “*...and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’*” (Acts 20:35)

### **8. Do Keep Our Focus On God And Service In His Kingdom.**

In all the Christmas rush, let us not forget who and what is our highest priority— God! (Matthew 6:33) It can be easy to be distracted by all the excitement and festivities, but we should remember we are Christians all year round.

Bible studies, prayers, faithful attendances to worship, and daily service to God should NOT be neglected in favor of Christmas fun. Shame on churches that cancel services just because they fall around the holiday season! May we, as God’s faithful servants, be better than that and put God’s kingdom first!

**News and Notes:** Sick and recovering: Tim Harris Sr, Tim Harris Jr, Chad Harris, Martha Norvell (Mississippi Care), June Lawson (Lisa Busby's Mom), Debbie Keplinger, Janis Johnson, Daniel Holloway, Tammy Kilgore (Jerry's niece), Betty Hurst, Peggy Harville (cancer), Linda Harris, Hazel Corner, Clay Ford, Clois Wright, and Dan & Linda Hunt, Martha Cottrell (Dan's Mom) is still recovering. Brandi Meade will have back surgery December 11th.

**Those Who Serve:**

**Sunday Morning 9:00 A.M. Service:**

**Opening Prayer:** Nathan Meade  
**Preaching:** Brian Meade  
**Sermon #1:** "Jesus And Evangelism"

**Auditorium Bible Class: 9:35am:**

**Sunday Morning 10:30 A.M. Service:** Jerry Kennemur  
The Book of Romans (Kyle Pope)  
*Page #37 Question #1*

**Announcements:** Russell Briggs  
**Opening Prayer & Scripture Reading:** Paul Busby  
*Colossians 1:25-28*  
**Song Leader:** Adam Harris  
**Lord's Supper:** Doug George  
**Assisting:** Russell Briggs & Nathan Meade  
**Preaching:** Brian Meade  
**Sermon #2:** "The Christian And Evangelism"  
**Closing Prayer:** Fred Johnson

**Wednesday Evening: 7:00 P.M.**

**December 11th:**

**Auditorium Bible Class:** Paul Johnson  
The Book of Psalms (Randy Blackaby)  
Lesson #3 (page 14) *Question #1*  
**Invitation:** Paul Busby  
**Song Leader:** Adam Harris  
**Closing Prayer:** Doug George