

Celebrating Wrongly?

Christmas

Today is Christmas. Happy Jesus' Birthday!

But not everyone is on board with celebrating Christmas. I was recently in an online conversation with someone who asserts that "true" Christians would never celebrate the birth of the Savior because the scripture doesn't command us to remember it, as we are told to do with Christ's death. Luke 22:19 records Jesus' instructions to celebrate the Lord's supper: "Do this in remembrance of Me." But the Bible bears no such instruction concerning His birth. So it must be wrong . . . right?

I couldn't disagree more. One of the things I most love about being a Christ-follower and a student of the Bible is that Jesus taught that the Kingdom of Heaven was about celebrating! (See Luke 14 and Matthew



22.) Since one of my identities is "God's Party Girl," that certainly resonates with me. Jesus continually got in trouble with the religious snobs who didn't care for His habit of partying with sinners—who then turned into Christ-honoring disciples!

And Christmas, at its core, is a holy celebration of the most astounding thing that ever happened on Planet Earth—God becoming flesh and dwelling among us. Yes, there are parts of

Christmas that are linked with pagan traditions. But God knows how to tell the difference, and by using our discernment skills, we can too. That's one way we can love Him with our minds (Luke 10:27), which is part of the greatest commandment.

In this past month of ramping up to Christmas, I have not failed to be blessed by the Christmas music that's everywhere, especially radio stations. Again, using discernment, I can dismiss (actually, in my mind I use the word "flush") the non-holy Christmas songs like "Santa Baby" and "Jingle Bells," and open up my spirit to glory in the gorgeous theology expressed in Christmas carols like no other songs. I still get chills when hearing my car radio proclaim, for example, the deep truths in "Hark the Herald Angels Sing":

Veiled in flesh, the Godhead see;
Hail, th'incarnate Deity:
Pleased, as man, with men to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel!

The cheery Christmas lights in our neighborhood remind me that Jesus came as the light of the world, and I celebrate.

The Christmas gifts we give each other point to God's great gift of salvation through His Son, and I celebrate.

But can we celebrate Christmas wrongly? Is it even wrong to celebrate Christmas in the first place?

It always, always comes down to the heart, to our motives. Jesus continually pulled back the covers on people's masks and presentations to expose what was truly going on inside and allow them to see themselves in the light of truth.

Is God honored by how we celebrate His Son's birth in our hearts? When music or lights move us to a place of worship smack dab in the middle of our days, does that glorify Him? Of course it does!

On the other hand, if we are stressed by the compulsion to make our families look picture perfect on social media . . . if we have to go into debt to buy Christmas gifts we can't afford . . . if we're continually snarling and complaining at all the holiday-related traffic and social demands, does that glorify Him? Nope. That's not celebrating Jesus' birthday and it's not honoring Him.

It all comes down to motive.

It's not wrong to celebrate Christmas, but it's possible to celebrate it wrongly. Here's hoping you stay focused on Jesus. Merry Christmas!

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