



The Family Friend

A collection of articles and quotes to aid your family in daily living.

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Some Thoughts About Your Money This Holiday Season

It's hard sometimes to stop long enough to think hard about who you really are. We are all wrapped up in this culture. And because we are in it we let everything around us dictate our behavior. We wind up being so swept up in the world that we do everything just like everyone else. I think the holidays are the ultimate example of this reality.

Take this into consideration: On Valentine's Day, we go to the restaurant. On July the 4th we go to the lake. On Thanksgiving, we go to grandma's house. And the day after Thanksgiving for about a month we go to the store.

I want to plead with you to be less materialistic this Christmas. Don't spend thousands of dollars buying Christmas gifts out of obligation. Don't give your kids everything they want on their list. Don't make unwise financial decisions that are going to affect your budget for months into the New Year.

Sit down with your family and make the decision not to make this final month of the

year about "things." Make it about relationships. Make it about spending time together. Make it about thanking God for the blessings of the year. Make it about doing something with those blessings to help others.

Here are a few suggestions about what to do with your money in December:



1. Make sure you are giving to the Lord of your first fruits. Don't let your weekly giving decline so you can buy stuff at Christmas! Our giving to God should be planned and consistent according to our prosperity. If you increase your giving this month, don't let it be for the tax break. Do it because you are thankful and because you love the Lord. 1 Corinthians 16:2 still counts in December.

2. Don't spend more money in December than you did all of the other months. We justify overspending because of the holidays. I am confident that nearly 100% will spend more this month than any other month. Some get end-of-the-year bonuses and perhaps this makes spending more a little easier. But have some self-control. Stay on budget. Don't get pulled into all the propaganda of the marketplace.

3. Do less for your blessed family and more to help those who are hurting. If you are going to buy Christmas gifts for your children, you can teach them a great lesson by buying for those who don't have much. Right now is the time to let your family know that you are going to share your blessings with others instead of taking hours and hours to open up presents on Christmas morning.

4. Give presents that are not so expensive. We have all heard the expression, "It's the thought that counts." How true! It's not the size of the gift or the amount of money that you spend that matters. The case in point for us has been our middle child. For years as soon as he gets that one thing (often inexpensive) that he wants, he is ready to go

into the other room and enjoy it for hours. He often doesn't even care about opening the rest of the gifts! You don't have to break your pocketbook to show others you love them. The greatest gifts are often made by hand and come from the heart, not the store.

My prayer for you is that you can rest and enjoy this holiday season. Make it about spiritual things rather than physical things. Love more. Bless others. Give thanks and honor to the Creator and Sustainer of every good and perfect gift!

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning." — James 1:17—**Jeremiah Tatum**

It's OK to Cry On Christmas

Happy holidays.

Merry Christmas.

It's the *most wonderful* time of the year.

While there is a lot of stress associated with Christmas—with all the shopping and outings—it is a time of the year I always enjoy, especially while we still have children at home young enough to be totally into Christmas.

For some, though, Christmas isn't easy. They may enjoy the day, and get to see family, and take part in all sorts of traditions, but, at some point during the day, they may shed tears. And I'm writing today's article to say that it's quite okay to cry on Christmas.

To me, Christmas is all about memories. We make memories each year, and we have memories of those past years. And with all the hurry and hustle, sometimes our emotions overflow as we think back to something that's just not there this year.

Maybe you've lost a loved one since last Christmas, and this will be your first holiday without that special person.

Maybe you've gone through a very difficult year and Christmas may not have all the trappings it did just a year ago.

Maybe you are still going through a time of illness and just aren't feeling up to all the excitement you so much love about this time of year.

Or maybe it's a memory from longer ago; just someone that you used to spend Christmas with, but who hasn't been there for a long time. Still, the memory lingers each time you eat that special meal, or sit down to open gifts, or just stare at the tree for a few minutes.

I know people who try to hold in emotions, especially on holidays, because they think it "brings down the mood" of everyone else. They feel as if they are ruining everyone's Christmas because they shed some tears or just need to be alone for a little while to collect themselves.

Let me assure you today: you aren't ruining anyone's Christmas by shedding some tears. In fact, you may be *helping* others, who also need to release some emotion this time of year and who feel that you have given them per-

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mission to also express those emotions.

If Christmas is about memories, then share them all. If some tears are shed as you tell stories or open a very special gift, there is no shame in that whatsoever. You never know: those tears may become not only cathartic; they may just become a special reminder of just how special this time of year really is!

—**Adam Faughn**

Both of these preceding articles appeared in past issues of *A Legacy of Faith*

"Family is not an important thing. It is everything."—Michael J. Fox

"You don't choose your family. They are God's gift to you, as you are to them."

—Desmond Tutu

"Each day of our lives we make deposits in the memory banks of our children."—Charles Swindoll

—via curatedquotes.com

Happy Holidays!

