

# Is There A Right And Wrong Way To Celebrate Christmas?

By Rev Sylvester Herbert

**C**hristmas is an annual festival that is celebrated by millions of people the world over. Christmas celebrations are as varied as the letters of the alphabet and each culture is sure to place their unique impress on these celebrations. That Christ should be celebrated few would dispute. Did not the angelic host welcome His birth with joyous outbursts of praise? However, the way some people celebrate the birth of Christ is cause for much discussion and not a little concern when their celebratory practices are placed under the searchlight of God's holy Word. Your Christmas celebration is wrong if it is characterized by any of the following attitudes or practices:

**1. Your debates about Christ takes precedence over your worship of Him**

Here is a sampling of the issues people debate every Christmas: (a) the date of Christ's birth; (b) the pagan origins of Christmas; (c) the use of Christmas trees as decoration; and (d) the place Santa Claus occupies in the celebrations.



These issues often consume so much of our time and attention that we rob ourselves of precious time to worship as the angels did (Lk. 2:13-14) or fall down like the wise men in wonder and adoration of the Christ (Matt. 2:11). Truth be told, much of our debating centers on issues that are not central to our salvation. Let us go beyond debate and worship the Christ of Christmas.

**2. Your merrymaking is more about what you want than about what Christ stands for**

The Word of God clearly outlines what Christ loves and what He hates. For example, He hates overindulgence. He hates revellings, that is, letting loose with wild celebrations or partying. These behaviours are called the

works of the flesh and are part of the lifestyle of people who do not know God (Gal. 5:19-20; I Pet. 4:3). It is to be lamented that a carnival atmosphere pervades much of our Christmas celebrations. Since it is Christ's birthday we are celebrating, shouldn't this be added reason to refrain from doing those things that grieve Him and do instead those things that delight His heart? Any behaviour considered offensive by the celebrant

is a blot on the celebrations taking place. Let us keep our celebrations clean and the heart of our Saviour glad.

### **3. Your desire for gifts is greater than your desire for the gift of Christ Himself**

Most persons expect to receive gifts at Christmas. Of course, it is not their birthday that is being celebrated but if they don't receive a gift or they don't get the kind of gift that they think they should get they feel let down, even upset with those who disappoint them. The greatest gift anyone can ever receive is Christ (II Cor. 9:15). And the greatest gift anyone can ever give is the gift of themselves to Christ and to others (II Cor. 8:5).



### **4. Your interest in material benefits is greater than the spiritual blessings Christ offers**

*A store owner was doing some last-minute*

*Christmas*

*shopping with his young son when he saw another store owner with whom he had been friends for some time. The two of them exchanged*

*greetings and spoke with each other about what a financially profitable season it had been for their respective stores. The small boy overheard his father say, "This has been the best Christmas ever."*

*As the store owners parted company, the father and son continued their shopping, but the father noticed his son had become very quiet. He inquired as to his son's silence, and his son replied, "Dad, you just told Mr. Johnson that this was the best Christmas ever."*

*His dad replied, "I did, son. The economy is great, and people are really spending."*

*"O.K." the son replied, "It's just that I always thought the first Christmas was the best one."*

Do you want to get your celebration of Christ right this Christmas? You just need to flip the aforementioned statements. It is still true that if we truly worship Him and allow the Word to guide our festive activities; if we value Him as the best gift, and desire eternal life more than money the spirit of Christ and Christmas will remain with us long after the season is past.