



Bible Baptist Church
CHRISTMAS FAMILY
DEVOTIONAL

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MAKING CHRISTMAS MEANINGFUL (AGAIN)

Christmas can be full of a lot of things. It can be full of family, food, travel, more food and probably a little bit more food. Christmas can also be full of busy schedules, running from one thing to another, full of stress as you work hard to buy those twenty expensive gifts for each kid to show them how much you love them.

Every year I have this goal to focus more on the true meaning of Christmas, but I usually end up rushing through the Christmas story on Christmas morning as my children pretend to be patient as gifts sit in front of them. I rush to get the lights up, pick a REAL Christmas tree and make sure we visit all the grandparents and that one cousin we didn't know we had. Then Christmas night comes, and I sit in front of the tree. I realize at that moment that my focus was more on the PRESSURE of a perfect Christmas instead of the PERFECT GIFT that was already given to me, JESUS CHRIST.

No matter where you are at, I want to encourage you to make Christmas meaningful again this year. Advent is something that has been practiced right before Christmas since the 6th century. The word means: The arrival or the coming. It's a time of year where Christians prepare themselves as they wait for the coming Savior. This is done starting 4 Sunday's before Christmas, ending with the celebration of the birth of Christ and the continued hope of His return.

The following Devotional is designed to do as a family, every Sunday night, starting November 29th. I will walk you through four concepts that come from the book/movement called Advent Conspiracy. These will also be our focus for the next four weeks at church. They are: **Worship Fully, Spend Less, Give More, and Love All**. Each devotional has an introduction, scripture reading, family discussion questions and a family activity. Feel free to revamp it to fit your family.

Our church website also has more resources for and your family. Go to bbckfalls.org/advent2020 to check it out. Enjoy this advent season!



WORSHIP FULLY

Christmas brings up many good things for a lot of us. Even when bad stuff is mixed in during the holidays, we can remember the good Christmas brings. What Christmas first brought, was our Savior. As a family, spend time reading the following passage to see how we were created to PRAISE and WORSHIP our Lord. There is a reason Jesus came down to earth and that should be a cause of worship to our one true God.

READ Psalm 150

Family Discussions:

1. Look at the different characters in the Christmas story and find out how they worshipped God?
Mary - Luke 1:46-55
Shepherds - Luke 2:8-20
Magi (Wiseman) - Matthew 2:1-11
2. How do you best worship God?
3. Are there ways to worship God other than with music?

Family Activity:

Find a little time this week to worship God, maybe through music (someone playing guitar, piano, playing a Worship CD, etc). You could write out praises on a piece of paper. If you have younger kids, have them draw a picture of their favorite part of Christmas and then take time to thank the Lord for that.



SPEND LESS

Christmas becomes this opportunity to purchase gifts for those we love, a chance to show how much we care for them and by getting them something meaningful and special. Unfortunately, as the list of people grow, our desire to be “fair” and the worries of them not liking it, cause us to buy more and more of random things to “fill the list”. Many people go into debt this time of year, making Christmas spending reach \$1 Trillion worldwide!

I am not saying don't buy anything. I am saying take time and think about what you are buying. Are you just trying to fill the stockings or are you buying meaningful and thoughtful gifts to show love and support to someone who needs it? In the Advent Conspiracy book, it says *“Spending less does not mean spending nothing. Rather, we strive to thoughtfully evaluate what we support with our spending, and allow our spending to support products, people, and causes that are worthy of being supported.”*

READ Matthew 6:19-24

Family Discussions:

1. How should we view presents in light of how we view treasures in Heaven?
2. According to Matthew 6, where should our focus be?
3. What are some ways we can give presents and still focus on the things above?

Family Activity:

Every family member pick one person this Christmas that you are going to get a present for WITHOUT spending any money. If you are older, spend at least 2 hours thinking of, making or presenting this to the person. For example, you decide to give your mom a “Day with you”, where you spend the whole day on a date with your mom. And don't make her come up with the activities! Come up with things you know she will like. If you have younger kids, ask them what they want to make. Let them take their time being creative. Ask them to write down what they appreciate or love most about that person.



GIVE MORE

Wait a minute! Didn't you just tell us to spend less, now you are telling us to give more.... what's going on? We can give more and spend less. Money should be used as a tool instead of the focus. Your children or parents won't love you less because you spent less. When we take time and think about what we are giving, they will appreciate it more.

In chapter 5 of Advent Conspiracy, it says "All the prophecies, all the promises, came down to one relational gift. The Father gave the most personal gift ever – his Son." The gift our Heavenly Father gave us was personal and relational. Immanuel means God with us. From the very beginning, relationships have mattered to God.

READ John 3:16-17

Family Discussions:

1. How did God show his love to us and the rest of the world?
2. What did He save us from? What is the result of that salvation (verse 16)
3. What would it look like this week for you to focus less on the presents and more on giving your time and presence?

Family Activity:

As a family come up with one activity you can all do together this week. Avoid the movies or something that doesn't allow you all to connect relationally. Play a board game together or go out to eat without anyone taking out their phones. Create intentional space that allows you to connect as a family.



LOVE ALL

Every Christmas I think about love. I think about how much I love my family. How much I miss those that I love that aren't around anymore, and how much God loves me and what He did by sending His son down to earth. I will be honest though, I don't usually think beyond God and my family. In the passage below, you will see we are called to love other people around us. It is as important as loving our Lord.

Our God sent His one and only son down to care for those that are hurting, lost and in need of a Savior. There are so many people around us this holiday season that need a Savior. There are people in your neighborhood that need someone to show them love and not just any type of love, a love that comes from our Heavenly Father.

READ Matthew 22:34-40

Family Discussions:

1. What is the greatest commandment in the law?
2. What is the second commandment that Jesus mentions? How important is this one?
3. What practical ways are you showing God's love to people around you?

Family Activity:

As a family take time to pray for those that could benefit from being loved this year. Those that are hurting or are in need. Take out a piece of paper and come up with practical ways, as a family, that you can love someone else this Christmas. This could be serving at the Gospel Mission, buying toys for Toys for Tots or even inviting over a widow or widower over for Christmas dinner. Once you write down all your ideas, vote on the one that you all want to do, then do it! Make sure everyone can be involved and experience how it looks to show God's love to the people around us.