

Examining Our Christmas Traditions

“A tradition is the handing down of information, beliefs, worldview from one generation to another by word of mouth and by regular repetition of example, of ceremony, of celebration. For a Christian, tradition is laying up God’s words in our own hearts and passing his words to the next generation.”

Noel Piper, *Treasuring God in Our Traditions*

Christmas traditions is an area that often runs away from us, and before we know it our traditions are controlling our holiday rather than helping us prize what’s most important.

A way to help amplify the joy, lessen the stress, and simplify Christmas is to identify the Christmas traditions you currently have and evaluate what works for your family.

Traditions for the Whole Family

When examining our Christmas traditions it’s important to keep our whole family in mind. It’s easy as curators of our home to pick traditions that are most appealing to ourselves.

What traditions appeal to you the most?

What traditions do your spouse and children enjoy and value the most?

In *Treasuring God in Our Traditions*, Noel Piper says, “For a Christian, tradition is laying up God’s words in our own hearts and passing his words to the next generation.”

How do you hope to lay up God’s word in your own heart this Christmas?

How do you hope to lay up God's word in your family's heart this Christmas?

What traditions and values do you want to pass on to your children?

What traditions (events, activities, or routines) will *aid* you?

Evaluating Traditions of Christmas Past

Is this tradition something you've always done, decided to do one year and it just stuck? Was it a tradition passed on from your families, do you even like it, or do you feel compelled to do it? What do you do year after year that hands down your beliefs and what you hold dear to the next generation?

What are your current family Christmas traditions?

Think back to last Christmas, did these traditions add more joy or stress?

Did your family, for the most part, enjoy them?

Do they stay within your Christmas budget?

Are they physically or emotionally taxing for your family? Did the joy outweigh the burden?

Do they propel your family closer to each other and Christ?

What traditions would you like to do?

How do these reflect, encourage, or reinforce your intangible priorities?

What traditions, values, beliefs do you want to pass on to your children and family?

What activities, object lessons, or traditions will aid you in passing on your beliefs?

Traditions & Your Christmas Priority

As you're evaluating your Christmas traditions, remember to think about your [yearly priority](#), as well as the vision and mission of your family. Sometimes simplifying means redefining our traditions, perhaps eliminating some, so that we are moving toward our end game—*Christ in you, the hope of glory*.

What traditions fit within your family mission and priority for this Christmas?

How do these reflect, encourage, or reinforce your intangible priorities?

What activities, object lessons, or traditions will aid you in pursuing your tangible and intangible priorities?

What's Your Why?

Why have you chosen these traditions? Have they been passed down from your respective families? Was it a great idea you heard someone else do and thought you'd try?

Are they working for you? Does your family enjoy them? Do they reinforce your values?

Do they distract from Christ? Do they cause more stress than joy?

A Gentle Reminder: As a young family, you don't have to continue every tradition each of your respective families have done. Pick what you want, but remember you're making your own family now. This is *your* family--not your parents, not your grandparents. You can break from past traditions to adopt new ones that fit the vision for your family.

Preparing for Your Traditions

In examining our traditions, don't forget to prepare for them in practical ways as well. Research the history, gather or make supplies, schedule events (if need be), and evaluate how and if they fit in your budget.

| Tradition | Date | Supplies | Cost | Notes |
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