

"Five Myths That Can Ruin Your Holidays"

Loved Ones, I have always been blessed by the ministry of Focus on the Family. My kids were raised on Whit's End and the Radio Theater. James Dobson ministered such life to us as young parents! Thank you FOF family for being such a Godly help for so many of us!

A few years ago, Jim Daly, President of Focus on the Family shared a message that is a game-changer: "Five Myths That Can Trash Your Holidays".

I thought a summary of the booklet might help keep us on track as we enter our favorite, yet probably most stressful season of the year.

Myth #1: Every holiday gathering with family is filled with peace and goodwill.

Jealousies, political differences, economic comparisons as well as memories of bad childhood experiences, and failed get-togethers of years past can come flooding in, sometimes quite unexpectedly. Sights, sounds, and even smells can propel us into old roles and relationships that we'd rather forget.

Myth #2: Connecting during the holidays will compensate for disconnection throughout the year.

I agree with the song that calls Christmas "the most wonderful time of the year." But it is practically impossible to cram an entire year of family togetherness into just a few days. The holidays are designed to celebrate an on-going vital relationship, not to be a box checked on an annual to-do list. With that being said, holidays can be a time of forgiveness and fresh starts.

Myth #3: Taking time out of the busyness for you and your spouse is selfish.

There is SO MUCH on the holiday calendar that schedules can easily

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become counter-productive especially in families with children. Even as a pastor, I found it easy to slip into the trap of being so busy during the holidays that you end up exhausted physically and emotionally. I'm not suggesting you drop all those activities. I am suggesting that you reserve and guard some time with your spouse in order to re-charge and re-connect in the midst of everything.

Myth #4: Family gatherings should look like a scene from a Hallmark movie.

Your family is as unique as you are. We have some very precious traditions, but let me tell you there have been many "attempted traditions" that didn't survive the Chitty family! I have watched some well-meaning families try to force traditions that just didn't work or just didn't fit who they were. In just a few years there was no room for anything or anyone else. If we aren't careful, instead of a Hallmark movie, we may end up with something like the Griswold Family Christmas – planned in exacting detail but hopelessly chaotic.

Myth #5: You can take Christ out of Christmas.

Keep in mind the reason for Christmas and you will end up having a season full of love, joy, hope and peace. Whatever you have faced this year – God has been with you. Whatever the new year brings, He will remain with you. But without Jesus Christ, there is no Christmas.

One more thing! Today we have identified the traps. Next week we will give some practical suggestions for how to get out of the snare but also how to avoid these traps in the first place. Let me be among the first to wish you the happiest of holidays. I am praying that they will be days of healing, health and hope for us all!

I love you,
Pastor Stephen
Pastor Emeritus