

"Overcoming the Five Myths that Ruin Holidays"

As you recall, last week we exposed the "Five Myths" that Focus on the Family identified as subtle enemies of the holiday season. I encourage you to re-read Table Talk from November 15th (available on the church website). Here's a quick recap and some suggestions on how to short-circuit the satanic plan:

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

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

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

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

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

Defeating the First Myth

Accept that you cannot change your relatives. You only have control over yourself. Remember to not take things personally. Usually the problem isn't about you but rather some unresolved issue in the life of your "adversary."

Avoid getting drawn into arguments. Don't feel the need to defend yourself. Some statements need to be briefly acknowledged or just ignored.

Take refuge if needed. Go to another room, make a call to a friend, run an errand – ultimately, move away from the source of stress. If possible, choose the venue wisely, or even make visits shorter and more manageable.

>>

Defeating the Second Myth

Don't force "magic moments," and don't try to force a solution to ongoing problems during the visits. If possible, issue necessary apologies and make offers to lead the way into true reconciliation. Many good apologies are destroyed by using the word "but." (Example: "I'm so sorry I haven't kept in touch, BUT you haven't tried either.") Ask God to give you wisdom on how to bring peace. Be willing to be a bridge-builder and make it easy for others to reach out without feeling threatened.

Defeating the Third Myth

Planning to be together during hectic times must be done as a couple. Plans made by two are always stronger and easier to keep than plans made by one alone. Pay attention to the gauges of your own life as well as those of your spouse if you have one. Keeping yourselves rested in spirit, soul and body is the best way to proactively deal with potentially stressful situations. Guard your devotional time as much as possible. Eat and sleep well plus pace yourself. Most everyone will understand your absence for a short nap when needed.

Incorporate "couple moments" during the busy season if you're married. If it is difficult to secure some alone time together because of the busyness, then use the activities in your favor: wrap gifts together, finish last-minute shopping, or do some baking with the one you love!

Defeating the Fourth Myth

Plan your calendar, tasks, budgets and gifts ahead of time. If you have a spouse, share with him or her your expectations and concerns. And be sure to make your plans and expectations realistic.

Defeating the Fifth Myth

Be sure to attend Christmas worship events such as church services, celebrations and programs (like our annual Christmas production!). Choose a community Christmas service project to do as a family. Keep up with a Christmas Advent calendar, and read the story of Christmas together as a family and discuss the true meaning.

I hope these suggestions help make this Christmas one of your best ever!

I love you,
Pastor Stephen
Pastor Emeritus