



## WHAT IS CHRISTMAS ALL ABOUT?

### **The husband's birthday**

A newlywed couple is taking a weekend off to celebrate the husband's birthday. They have looked forward to this for months. It's their first vacation together since the honeymoon. The new bride wants it to be perfect. She wants him to have everything good she can provide.

Once they're situated in their cozy cabin, she immediately takes off to town. She spends hours driving and walking around, scouring the shops for her beloved's favorite foods, drinks, desserts, and lovely knick-knacks to decorate the cabin just the way she knows he'd like it. Certain things have to be done certain ways--it's traditional--and no expense is spared.

Then on top of all this, she seeks high and low until she finds the right gift. Well, she's not even sure it's the right gift, but she thinks it's beautiful, and hopes he will too. The day is nearly over, the sun is setting, the little resort cabin is quiet. As she walks in the door, her husband approaches her warmly, but is met only with a casual quick embrace, because she has to hurry into the kitchen to continue the preparations.

He sits on a chair in the corner of the sitting room and watches as she races back and forth from the open kitchen to the dining room--stirring a pot, then lighting a candle, then slicing some vegetables, then turning on the ambient music. Finally everything is ready, and she retreats to the room to decorate herself as well. As she emerges, she expects to be met with gratitude and appreciation for all her efforts to get everything right. Instead she finds a look of pain and loss on her lover's face.

What did she do wrong? It's easy enough for us to see. But sometimes we're all a little like that foolish young wife. She didn't even notice that she had left him behind in all her flurry. All he wanted was time--to be with her, to talk, to laugh, to be held and

loved. Everything was “perfect,” but he missed out on the day he could have had with her. That would have been what made it perfect for him.

Christmas is Jesus’ birthday. Think about how He wants to celebrate it, what He wants from you, and what would make it perfect for *Him*.

### **If Christ were here...**

Like most everyone, you’ve got a full calendar for December ... shopping, presents, parties, plans, preparations, cooking, cleaning, hosting, visiting. *But stop for a minute and reflect: Why am I doing all this? Who am I trying to please? Or just impress?*

This holiday is meant to be a celebration of the purest, simplest and most complete love ever known--the love of a Heavenly Father who sent His Son to live among us, to teach us how to love, to make our lives better and happier. He eliminated the need for complex rules and rituals, and taught us that we didn’t have to be perfect, get everything right, and live up to unrealistically high expectations. All we had to do was love Him and love our neighbor, and with that, we’d please Him and find happiness.

Why not try something different this year and strive for simplicity in your Yuletide celebrations? Clear out some of the unnecessary clutter of events and expenses that won’t really mean much to anyone anyway. Leave yourself time to concentrate on the things that will truly mean something to you and to others: spend time with the people you care about; get gifts that will show not merely your good taste, but your care and concern; find someone with fewer blessings than you, and reach out to fulfill some need he or she has.

*If Christ were here today, I believe that is how He would celebrate Christmas.*

### **Finding the purpose of Christmas...**

Why is it that the occasion that celebrates God’s great love is for many one of loneliness and sadness? Is it because we forget the true meaning of Christmas? Sometimes we lose it in the baubles and lights, the presents and the celebration. When we forget the real purpose of Christmas we lose the happiness that comes with it. Preparations crowd out the purpose of Christmas--showing thankfulness and appreciation for what God gave mankind on this night.

Christmas is ultimately a celebration of love--God’s love for each one of us. The best way we can celebrate Christmas is by giving our gifts to Jesus, gifts of love and thankfulness. It is a time when we can stop and remember those who are often forgotten. We can reach out to help those in need. We can show our thankfulness by reaching out to those whose need is greater than ours.

*These are the things that not only make God happy, but help us find deep satisfaction. Christmas is not made special by presents, decorations and parties, but by what we give to Jesus and to others from our hearts. Giving from your heart demonstrates true gratitude and appreciation for what God has given to us during this Christmas season.*