



Christmas with Jolly Old St. Nick? Or Not?

Christmas is all about....Christ!...and His birth, right? As Christians, parents seek ways to make this Christ-holiday (or holyday) a special time for their children. Many of them remember some of the things that their parents did for them. They remember things like: Christmas trees, Christmas cookies, Santa Claus and so many others. So, they buy a Christmas tree, and bake cookies and tell their children about Santa Claus. But, some people question this, should parents teach their children about Santa Claus?

Now, of course, not all parents teach about Santa Claus for the sake of tradition, some may do it because everybody else does and they don't want their children to be left out, or for other personal reasons (like, who will come and fill the stockings?). But the reason is not important; for many, the issue is. Is it wrong to teach your children about Santa? Or is it a good childhood memory thing?

Why do we teach about Santa? Probably for the tradition and for the joy and fun it helps little ones experience. Christmas, though, is about Christ and His birth. It should be a celebration for Him. Does Santa Claus help that image?

One of the greatest difficulties with teaching Santa Claus is the fact that it is a lie. Now that is rather blunt, but it really isn't the truth. And all children, sooner or later, find that out. This discovery is not usually traumatic (except to the mother discovering her baby's growing up!), but it is a discovery that their parents have "told a story" (in more ways than one). This might not be a big deal; after all, we fibbed about the surprise party; but it is lying about something that is not factual, but something they must believe ("Santa doesn't give toys to little boys and girls who don't believe in him"). A little bit like.....Jesus. So here they are, finding out that Mom and Dad fibbed to them, and you can't trust in things that are unseen, you have to trust in evidence. So Mom and Dad could have been lying about Jesus all along. And even if they do believe in it, they know you just can't believe in things without proof, that's childish (forget that Jesus once talked about "faith like a child"!) This would be a terrible thing to happen. And though chances may be infinitely small, is any chance worth it?

The second big problem is that Santa takes up Christmas. You can be moderate, but Santa does take precious time and effort from Christ. The focus is supposed to be on Jesus' birth, but now it is on worshipping Santa, and what he sometimes represents;....commercialism. Yes, Santa can inspire commercialism, though thankfully, not always. It just depends on how much of your focus is on the gifts and how much is on the giving. But we want to spend all our time and put all our focus on the best gift of all. And Santa just doesn't seem to fit in to that.

Christmas is Christ's holy day. He gave it to us when He gave us Himself. The least we can do is appreciate Him. When Santa Claus doesn't help us do that; when he takes just a little of our focus and our time; when he robs our children of a firm trust in Jesus; then he is not worth keeping. There are lots of other special things to do, things which can bring the spotlight back to the stable. Christmas plays with the family actors and actresses, making special crafts, doing Christmas baking together, listening to beautiful music, and decorating the house are all great traditions to make Christmas special. And it is quite all right to have a Christmas tree and Christmas cookies!

JESUS is the Reason for the Season!!!!

