

Biblical Insights for the Person Dreading Christmas This Year

Dear Anyone Struggling With Family This Holiday Season,

'Tis the season for ... difficult family dynamics. I was pretty intrigued to see how my last podcast and devotional about Christmas chaos so widely resonated.

My "Christmas survival guide" offered some biblical insights on dealing with tough family members and related problems. So, I want to follow up on that. Listen below:

Let's start by acknowledging some simple truths:

- Family is amazing, but some dynamics can be difficult to navigate.
- Some families simply don't have joy at their center.
- Some people lament/dread the holidays due to their difficult family dynamics.
- The holidays sometimes up the ante on/highlight our family problems.
- Christians aren't immune to the above issues.

As I stated in my last devotional, we all have a responsibility to contain our role in the familial chaos if and when it rages. Simply stated: our words (and actions) matter. As we march toward Christmas Day, let's remember a few important points:

- We don't always need to have the last word.
- It's OK to simply let our loved ones be wrong and silently walk away.
- Two wrongs aren't ever going to make a right.
- What we say in anger will typically come back to haunt

us.

- God calls us to be better, regardless of what the other person is saying or doing.

Proverbs 26:4 (NIV) offers some pretty powerful holiday advice for those of us who struggle: “Do not answer a fool according to his folly, or you yourself will be just like him.” Full disclosure: I’ve been a fool before when I’ve violated this verse. Have you?

More disclosure: I’ve been a fool on more than one occasion.

So many of us keep fighting the same fight rather than choosing love or simply avoiding the conflict all together, yet Proverbs 26:11 (MEV) also has a pretty pointed reminder: “As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool returns to his folly.”

Perhaps it’s time to stop repeating the same bad decisions.

At the end of the day, we are responsible for our own words and actions. Proverbs 26:20 is pretty convicting too, as it proclaims: “Where there is no wood, the fire goes out; so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceases.” We hold the power to stop the chaos, or to avoid it altogether.

If you’re looking for more on this topic, I’d encourage you to listen to and read” “The 3 Verses That Will Help You Survive Chaos (and Drama) This Christmas Season.” Let’s be better.
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