

How to Flip Your Complaints About Christmas Into a Christ-Centered Testimony

You may be reading this in early December, but complaints about Christmas already abound. Have you heard them?

–“Christmas has become too commercialized!”

This one isn't really new. Remember the 1947 classic movie, *Miracle on 34th Street*? More than 70 years ago, people were complaining about Christmas commercialism. One of my favorite quotes from that movie is:

“Yeah, there's a lot of bad 'isms' floatin' around this world, but one of the worst is commercialism. Make a buck, make a buck. Even in Brooklyn it's the same—don't care what Christmas stands for, just make a buck, make a buck.” —Alfred, the janitor at Macy's in *Miracle on 34th Street*

–“Christmas is being ruined by the politically correct crowd!”

“Merry Christmas” might offend someone, so how about “Happy Holidays”? If you don't like that one, feel free to wish people a “Merry Coffee.” Yes, that phrase is now appearing on the cups of a certain national coffee chain.

–“We've lost the true spirit of Christmas!”

What's the true spirit of Christmas? Ask five people and you'll receive six answers, and most of them are usually found in a Hallmark Christmas movie. The spirit of Christmas is love. Giving. Family. In one Christmas movie, the spirit of Christmas is an actual spirit who hasn't “crossed over” yet!

Perhaps you've shared these same complaints. Maybe you have a few of your own about the Christmas season.

We can dwell on the complaints, or we can change our perspective and our behavior.

Instead of complaining about commercialism, just don't buy into it (pun intended!). Declare your family gift exchange a "homemade zone." All gifts must be homemade or services offered. No purchase required!

Instead of getting upset over politically correct greetings, extend a little grace. Perhaps the store employee is simply following her manager's instructions. The next time someone wishes you a "Happy Holiday," why not respond with a dose of kindness? I try to reply, "Thank you. And if you celebrate Christmas, Merry Christmas!"

And the true spirit of Christmas? I love those Hallmark movies as much as anyone, but they miss the boat on this one. The spirit of Christmas isn't any of the things usually mentioned. The spirit of Christmas is Jesus! All those other things—love, giving, family—they're all made so much better because of the birth of the one who came to restore us to our heavenly Father.

So as we enter the Christmas season, the next time we feel the urge to complain, let's just flip it around. Don't be part of the problem; be part of the solution. Grumbling about "those people who are tarnishing our Christmas celebration" won't win them over and will only reinforce negative stereotypes about Christians.

When we reflect Christ to a hostile world, we proclaim the real reason for the season. Let's start today! {eoa}

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