

What Christians Do That Drive People Away From God

It is an unfortunate habit many of us have fallen in to.

Shaming.

You can insert whatever kind of shaming you want, but essentially it boils down to something I do or don't do that somehow makes me feel superior.

The blogosphere and social media are filled with it – from women who feel they are superior because they don't wear pants to moms who don't allow their kids to watch any TV.

And for the record. Yes, I did do a screen-free series in October but my kids still watch TV sometimes. ... sometimes more than what I am comfortable with.

There is the Christian shaming of those who celebrate Halloween or various Christian holidays that others deem "pagan".

Or how about all those anti-black Friday shopper people who made those who shop on Black Friday feel inferior because shopping on Black Friday is somehow materialistic.

But isn't materialism a state of the heart ... and not a day of the month?

Perhaps what we haven't stopped to consider is the families on a super-tight budget who decided to take advantage of the good deals so their kids could have Christmas this year.

That's not materialistic, it's frugal. An admirable trait to have!

Now that we've entered December, there will be the anti-elf on

the shelf people who will make you feel bad if you're OK with that.

Listen.

I am not crazy about Elf on the Shelf for my own personal reasons.

And that is exactly what it should be.

Personal.

Unless you can give me a chapter and verse about Halloween, a certain toy, or a day when we should not go shopping, the conviction for or against these is personal.

And you know what?

A personal conviction is something everyone gets to have.

And I don't even mind if you share yours with me as long as you give me the opportunity to keep mine without feeling like mine is inferior to yours.

The danger we often face is this:

The foundation for our personal convictions is a strong belief about something. Because we feel so strongly about that thing, we wish to tell others about our belief and somehow win them over to our way of thinking.

This is not inherently wrong. It is natural for us to want to share our strong beliefs on certain matters, especially as communicators.

To ask people with personal convictions to keep their opinions to themselves is unfair because it robs the one with convictions of the same freedom we are being robbed of when we feel we're not allowed to have a differing conviction!

Somehow we have to bring the two camps together:

The one with the strong personal conviction and the one with the opposing conviction.

I believe that in Jesus Christ there is room for both.

I believe that Paul addressed this when he said, "Whoever regards one day as special does so to the Lord. Whoever eats meat does so to the Lord, for they give thanks to God; and whoever abstains does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God" (Romans 14:6).

There is room for us all to have personal convictions, and mutual respect at the same time.

I urge you this holiday season to do the following:

If someone wishes you "Happy Holidays" instead of Merry Christmas, genuinely look them in the eyes and wish them whatever greeting you choose to use. But don't use it as a weapon, use it as a bridge!

If you choose not to celebrate Christmas, graciously embrace those who do without making them feel like they are compromising their faith by doing so. Build a bridge!

If a mom takes pictures of a naughty elf about her house doing silly things, please don't make her feel like she's inferior because your family has chosen not to do Elf on the Shelf. If you do Melk or another fun Christmas activity with your kids, rock it! Take pictures and show us! There's room for us all! Let's build a bridge!

If a woman got a good deal on Black Friday – whether online or she braved the busy stores – congratulate her! Build a bridge!

Let's stop shaming one another and build a bridge!

Let's purpose this year to stop the mom, parent, Christian shaming and build bridges by accepting each others' personal convictions with the grace and love of Jesus Christ!

Rosilind Jukic, a Pacific Northwest native, is a missionary living in Croatia and married to her Bosnian hero. Together they live with their two active boys where she enjoys fruity candles, good coffee and a hot cup of herbal tea on a blustery fall evening. Her passion for writing led her to author her best-selling book *The Missional Handbook*. At *A Little R & R* she encourages women to find contentment in what God created them to be. You can also find her at *Missional Call* where she shares her passion for local and global missions. She can also be found at on a regular basis. You can follow her on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Google +.