

When Christmas Is Over

Intense desires and expectations accompany the Christmas season. Beneath the smiles, lavish decorations, and melancholy music, most people are longing for deeper meaning and validation.

In pursuing this, they will eagerly await loved ones making the long trek home. They'll endlessly search for the perfect gifts. There's a desire to compensate for the awkwardness and disconnection that has quietly crept into their connections. They believe the tinsel and tree will somehow make up for eleven and a half months of inattention.

Sadly, what's envisioned seldom comes to pass. All that's left, after the dishes are washed and the paper is thrown out, is a numbing sense of disappointment. Christmas is rarely what people have made it out to be.

On some level the prophet Habakkuk experienced something similar centuries ago. What was going on around him was so much less than he imagined. As he observed all of this, he declared:

"Even though the fig trees have no blossoms, and there are no grapes on the vines; even though the olive crop fails, and the fields lie empty and barren; even though the flocks die in the fields, and the cattle barns are empty" (Habakkuk 3:17-18a).

Though the luster had faded and nothing looked like he envisioned, Habakkuk found a way to move beyond the disappointment. He knew festivals didn't live up to the hype because something more was to be discovered below the surface. Beyond the rituals, forms, and hopes of abundance, there was a calling to worship and enjoy the Lord.

Though disappointment was threatening to overtake him, Habakkuk would boldly declare: *"Yet I will rejoice in the Lord! I will be joyful in the God of my salvation!"* (Habakkuk 3:18b).

The way that Habakkuk moved beyond the disappointment was by finding his ultimate validation and meaning in the Lord.

In this Christmas season, you would do well to follow this prophet's example. Your little world will probably never meet your expectations. It will invariably leave you empty and devoid of meaning.

Yet, there's something wonderful that transpires when a deep abiding joy is found in the Lord. It enables you to find meaning in something that's truly substantive and unchanging.

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