

# 3 Ways to Simplify Your Christmas

The Christmas blitz has hit full stride and you're overwhelmed. Maybe your to-dos are longer than a 4-year-old's Christmas list, and you have no idea how—or when—they'll get done.

Is your Christmas shaping up to be more of a hassle than a Christ-centered holiday?

What can you do to cut the stress and find the joy of Christ this season?

**1. Get organized.** You don't have to do everything. And shouldn't. Try these tips to make things easier on yourself:

- Make a list of everything you'd like to do before Christmas. It might include decorating and wrapping gifts. Maybe it's baking or attending a Christmas concert. Whatever it is, write it down. Now look at your list again. Do all the things you've written down *really* need to be done? Which things can you do without? Which ones can you delegate to others? Don't be shy; go ahead and cross some things off.
- If the mere thought of Christmas shopping makes you want to crawl in a hole till the new year, don't do it. Skip the crowds (and gas money) and try finding your gifts online. You might even ship them straight to your friends and family. Many online retailers even let you include a written message with your gift.
- Giving gifts can become more of an obligation than a joy. Do you have a family you're shopping for? Give one family gift instead of individual gifts. If it's your own family, find an activity to do together instead of exchanging gifts. You might even suggest giving to a

charity of each person's choosing in lieu of traditional gifts.

- December means holiday parties. And *that* means you'll probably be asked to bring something. That's right, another dish for another party. Knock out all the cooking at once by making more of one dish, then divvying it up among parties. Here's another tip: make something simple!
- Maybe you're the one having guests over. If you're hosting a couple of events, consider scheduling them close together so all your cooking and cleaning efforts can be combined.

Don't try to be a superhero. Know your limits, and do yourself a favor by staying within them. You might even have to say no to a few things. Don't feel guilty about it. Christmas doesn't have to be about overextending yourself.

Read more: How to make Christmas a less stressful, more spiritual time.

**2. Find joy.** There's a lot of buildup to Christmas, but maybe it's a burden for you, and you'll be glad when it's over.

"For many, the Christmas season is filled with worry and stress," Billy Graham once said. "But, of course, it shouldn't be this way. Christmas should be a time of joy and thankfulness, for it celebrates the greatest event in human history: the coming of Jesus Christ into the world. On that night over 2,000 years ago, God stepped down from heaven's glory and took upon Himself our humanity, so we could come to know Him."

Think about that for a second: Christmas celebrates the God of the universe who came down to our level in the form of Jesus Christ so we can know Him in a deep, personal way. That's why, when Jesus was born, angels praised God, saying, "Glory to God in the highest!" (Luke 2:14). How can we not find joy in such

a selfless act of love toward us?

Don't let this season slip by without making a concerted effort to keep Christ at the heart of Christmas. You might even start with this Advent devotional from Billy Graham to focus on the meaning of Christmas. (Check back each week at [for more Advent devotionals leading up to the holiday.](#))

Listen to this 1-minute clip about how one woman's joy was restored in the midst of a challenge.

You've heard the song, but what's the story behind it? Take a look at the meaning behind "Joy to the World."

**3. Rest.** Nonstop Christmas ads and the overload of all things glittery and bright can wear you out, and who wants to start the new year exhausted? We already talked about simplifying, but rest goes a step further.

Rest isn't just cutting back; it's taking a break.

Billy Graham has given two reasons to set aside time for rest: "If we work all the time, not only will we wear out physically, but we'll also neglect our relationship with God."

It can be hard to justify taking a break with such a busy season upon us, but it's crucial for both our physical and spiritual well-being. Here are some suggestions to find the rest you need:

- Turn off the radio and TV and consider taking a break from social media for a certain period of time. Use that time instead to pray or read the Bible.
- Plan out brief times of rest—start with a couple times a week—and stick to it. Work, spouses, children and unforeseen circumstances may disrupt this scheduled time, but try your best to stay with the plan.
- Staying up late can be tempting but can also lower your energy the next day. Set an alarm for yourself at night

to remind yourself it's time for bed.

Burnout is real. Take a look back at this article from BGEA's summer series: 5 Ways to Replenish a Burned-Out Soul.

Matthew 11:28 says, "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." It's a kind of rest that goes deeper than a good night's sleep.

Listen to a message from Billy Graham on the rest that endures.

*For the original article, visit .*