

## Pastor's Corner

*The True Holiday Spirit*

December 23, 2009

Dear Friend,

In reading the Gospel accounts of Christ I am always impressed with His focus. It was always on people, not on the program. He took the time to stop and talk to a lady who was already healed of a long illness; He interrupted His sleep time (or His prayer time) to talk late into the evening with Nicodemus; He postponed His trip to Jerusalem to spend time with a guy sitting in a tree; and He delayed one of His bigger miracles – feeding thousands of people from only a few morsels of food – in order to make sure the people were all sitting down and ready to eat.

In my life I find many times when I get rude and short with others, when I get impatient, and when I get frustrated, it's usually because I'm focused on the program, or even how the person is getting in the way of my program. Perhaps that is one of the reasons we have so much stress in our lives. We need to get our focus back on what is important to Jesus – people.

Last evening my wife and I were shopping. I love the holiday season! The lights, the decorations, and the music, I just love this time of the year. But I started thinking about how much the decorations and presents can take the place of just plain being nice to others. An e-mail from my friend Dean reminded me of this today, and I wanted to share it with you. It's a paraphrase – a Christmas version, if you will – of [1 Corinthians 13](#):

*If I decorate my house perfectly with plaid bows, strands of twinkling lights and shiny balls,  
but do not show love to my family, I'm just another decorator.*

*If I slave away in the kitchen, baking dozens of Christmas cookies, preparing gourmet meals and arranging a  
beautifully adorned table at mealtime,  
but do not show love to my family, I'm just another cook.*

*If I work at the soup kitchen, carol in the nursing home and give all that I have to charity,  
but do not show love to my family, it profits me nothing.*

*If I trim the spruce with shimmering angels and crocheted snowflakes, attend a myriad of holiday parties and sing in  
the choir's cantata but do not focus on Christ, I have missed the point.*

*Love stops the cooking to hug the child.  
Love sets aside the decorating to kiss the husband.*

*Love is kind, though harried and tired.*

*Love doesn't envy another's home that has coordinated Christmas china and table linens.*

*Love doesn't yell at the kids to get out of the way, but is thankful they are there to be in the way.*

*Love doesn't give only to those who are able to give in return but rejoices in giving to those who can't.*

*Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*

*Love never fails. Video games will break, pictures will fade, clothes will be worn out, golf clubs will rust, but giving  
the gift of love will endure.*

Let's make this Holiday season a time where we focus on people, those dear to us, and don't let the program of everything else get in the way!

Happy Holidays! We're praying for you this season that you will get closer to Jesus Christ, the reason for our existence!

Mark