

THE TWELVE WAYS OF CHRITMAS

Hebrews 10:19-25

Christmas: that magic blanket that wraps itself about us, that something so intangible that it is like a fragrance.

It may weave a spell of nostalgia. Christmas may be a day of feasting, or of prayer, but always it will be a day of remembrance. **Augusta E. Rundel**

Line by line, moment by moment, special times are etched into our memories in the permanent ink of everlasting love in our relationships. **Gloria Gaither**

Christmas is a good time to take stock of our blessings. **Pat Boone**

A family is a place where principles are hammered and honed on the anvil of everyday living. **Charles Swindoll**

The God who adopted you into His forever family knows how to make earthly families work. **Charles Stanley**

The Son of God became man to enable men to become sons of God. **C.S. Lewis**

The manger is a symbol of what can happen when Jesus Christ resides inside us. The ordinary suddenly becomes extraordinary.

A 'way' is like a habit...a usual or customary practice or manner of doing things...the prevailing disposition of a person's thoughts, feelings, or behavior. A pattern or mode of behavior that is acquired by frequent repetition.

Today we will look at twelve ways of developing healthy habits and how we can bless God, our friends, and family just as if we were wrapping gifts and putting them under the Christmas tree.

19Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, 20by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, 21and since *we have* a great priest over the house of God, 22let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled *clean* from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. 23Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He

THE TWELVE WAYS OF CHRISTMAS

who promised is faithful; ²⁴and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, ²⁵not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging *one another*; and all the more as you see the day drawing near. **Hebrews 10:19-25 NASB**

TWELVE WAYS THAT WILL HELP YOU:

1. A working relationship with the Word of God (**v19**) His word gives us confidence. (**v22**) Faith is built in our hearts as His Word is revealed in our Spirits, and our conscience is cleansed as our minds are renewed from the Light of His Word...we are made clean by the Word He speaks to us (**John 15**) and by the washing of water with the Word (**Ephesians 5:26**).
2. A growing heart attitude of Worship – (**v18**) Let us confidently enter the Holy place. Being in His presence changes us...Your past gets healed in His presence (**v22**)...let us draw near – release your heart to Him and discover Him releasing His heart to you...If you are not feeling in love – make the choices that a person in love would make and the feelings will follow. (See **Psalm 34:1**)
3. An on-going prayer life...(v19-21) New and living way – a great high priest who intercedes for you...
4. A faith that looks for reasons to believe...
 - a. (**v19**) confidence
 - b. (**v23**) holding fast to hope based on God's faithfulness
 - c. Believing that the best is yet to come and that He can do and wants to do more in us with us and for us.
5. A heart that responds with kindness:
 - a. (**v24**) stimulated to love and good deeds: a heart that chooses kindness will soon be a heart that receives much love.
6. Forgiveness
 - a. (**v22**) our hearts sprinkled clean and our consciences cleared- don't store rancid food in your pantry – (no sewer connection). Forgiveness is a building block to health and a step to release healing.
7. Steadfastness – it is always too soon to quit.
 - a. (**v23**) hold fast – no wavering...
 - b. Powerful – persistent patience – don't stop until you are fully vested.
 - c. Giving up is always a choice! Waiting is the womb of intimacy with God and integrity with men...

THE TWELVE WAYS OF CHRISTMAS

8. Fellowship: we need to intentionally plan to be together.
 - a. (v24-25) putting the best in and pulling the best out of each other...assembling together.
 - b. Most people – especially in the formative years of their faith have a quality of Christian life commensurate with church attendance...why? Because they lose the encouragement, stimulation, and love to carry on...(sounds like a pastor!) The more God does, the more we need to be together...
 - c. Football analogy: the greatest, most developed players in the world have to participate in practice, trainings, and team meetings or they don't get to play...or they don't play well because they aren't in game shape.
9. Encouragement: we need to make ways to give it and receive it.
 - a. (v24-25) we need to increasingly be encouraging each other and we increasingly need to be encouraged by others.
 - b. A heart that is filled with expressive kindness will soon be accompanied by a mouth that freely encourages.
10. Sharing our faith: we need to purpose to see God open doors for us to share our faith.
 - a. (v23-24) We need to stimulate those who don't know and love Him to do so by our life, testimony, and love.
11. Giving: we need to plan to give our time, treasure, and talent to God and to others: Good deeds = giving.

Read **Titus 3:14**

“And let our people also learn to engage in good deeds to meet pressing needs, that they not be unfruitful..”

Giving living brings fruitfulness in every area...

12. Awareness: we need to focus on being spiritually and mentally aware so He can make us sensitive to His working...
 - a. (v25) as we see the day drawing near...
 - b. We need to recognize the time of our visitation the leadings, drawings, promptings, and witness of God's Spirit to our hearts...

These habits will bring renewal and refreshing to our hearts and keep the Christmas Spirit – ie. The Incarnation of Immanuel, God with us all year round...

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God's gift to us this year is grace, power to change our habits which will change our lives.

Let's ask Him for one change of 'way', one change of habit this Christmas.

I have an idea...let's ask for a 'voice lesson' this Christmas...for a new healthy tone of voice this year.

Lord...'tune our tone'....lace our tone of voice with love, honor, humility, gratitude, and joy. We give you our tone of voice to your Lordship.

This is a gift that can bless everyone around us all year long.