

“Reclaiming Christmas”

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I. In order to reclaim Christmas, we must identify the following heart obstacles:

A. Looking for contentment and the meaning of life in the wrong places. (Ecclesiastes 2:1-11)

B. Worldly values and priorities. (James 4:4; 1 John 2:15; 2 Timothy 4:10; Philippians 3:20)

“Today, the greatest challenge facing American evangelicals is not persecution from the world, but seduction by the world.”

C.J. Mahaney, *Worldliness*, Crossway Books, Wheaton, Illinois, 2008, p. 22.

“Charles Spurgeon, writing 150 years ago, nevertheless speaks poignantly to the problem in the church today: ‘I believed,’ he asserted, ‘that one reason why the church of God at this present moment has so little influence over the world is because the world has so much influence over the church.’”

C.J. Mahaney, *Worldliness*, Crossway Books, Wheaton, Illinois, 2008, p. 23.

C. Seeking the approval of people above God. (Galatians 1:10)

II. Solution

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”

I John 1:9

A. Confess our sins.

B. Receive Christ’s forgiveness.

C. Ask God to change and purify our hearts.

III. Reflection questions:

- A. Are you content? Where do you look to find contentment? Ask those close to you if they see you as being content. How does the lack of contentment, or looking for contentment in the wrong places, impact your Christmas season? How does finding contentment in your walk with God translate to a Christ-centered, God-honoring Christmas and New Years? What do you want your children to understand about contentment and how it relates to Christmas?

- B. Interact with your spouse and friends about how the world's values and priorities impact your Christmas season. What are the biblical values you or your spouse want to reflect in your family over Christmas and New Years, and how can those values be implemented into the holidays? Looking at your calendar in December, how do you spend your time, and how does that reflect what your values and priorities are? What determines how much you spend on gifts? What should determine how much money is spent on gifts? Based on the amount of money you spend and what you spend it on over the Christmas season, have you bought into the world's values and priorities?

- C. Do you ever stop and try to discern what events and functions God expects you to say "yes" to and which ones He expects you to say "no" to? Do you attend certain events and functions simply to keep the peace in your relationships? Is it possible for family or friends to be an idol and more important to you than God? Do you talk and pray with your spouse over what holiday events you will or will not attend? If you decide to seek God's approval above your family and friends, how will that impact your Christmas season?