

**Today's Message: "be [Christmas]: Part 1—Joseph"**

We often hear the phrase, "Put Christ back in Christmas." Have we ever considered that in our efforts to win back the holiday, we may be part of the problem? What would it look like this Christmas for us to instead "put Christ back in Christians"?

<sup>18</sup> Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly.

<sup>20</sup> But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." <sup>22</sup> All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

<sup>23</sup> "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us).

<sup>24</sup> When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, <sup>25</sup> but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus. (Matthew 1:18-25 ESV)

Just because you have the **right** doesn't make it **right**.

**be [Christmas] Challenge:**

**Monday – Give a sincere compliment to five different people today.**

**Tuesday – Do a chore for someone else without being asked.**

**Wednesday – Open a door for someone as many times as you can.**

**Thursday – Send a card to someone that might be lonely this season.**

**Friday – Bake cookies and deliver some to a neighbor.**

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**Servanthood Defined:**

A servant relinquishes his rights that he may better serve God and others (Phil. 2:5-7). The heart of a servant desires to be available to God for His purposes, which includes serving others. A servant's attitude is one of open and upward palms, willing to allow the Lord to take from him, as well as to give to him (1 Cor. 9:24-27)

- Servants surrender their rights to their family.
  - Servants surrender their rights to marriage.
  - Servants surrender their rights to singleness when they marry.
  - Servants surrender their rights to their friends.
  - Servants surrender their rights to their freedom.
  - Servants surrender their rights to their finances and possessions.
  - Servants surrender their rights to popularity and reputation.
  - Servants surrender their rights to their time.
  - Servants surrender their rights to food, shelter, sleep and comfort.
  - Servants surrender their rights to their position, rank or place of importance.
  - Servants surrender their rights to their nationality or denomination.
  - Servants surrender their rights to gifts and ministry.
  - Servants surrender their rights to their opinions and the right to be right.
  - Servants surrender their rights to their future.
- Surrendering one's rights does not mean that one does not take responsibility for the people and things in their lives. The purpose of the servant relinquishing their rights is for the sake of being available to God to serve Him and others more effectively, not become irresponsible.
- Whatever rights we don't relinquish to God can subtly drive our lives, even to the point of mastering us (1 Cor. 6:12, 9:24-27).
- Evidence of not relinquishing our rights may include reactions of anger, self-pity or attempts to control.

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