

MONDAY

John 19:6 ⁶ *When the high priests and police saw him, they shouted in a frenzy, "Crucify! Crucify!" Pilate told them, "You take him. You crucify him. I find nothing wrong with him."*

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I remember the day when, having just been based in the U.S., at the New York's office to the Company, I made a call to the advertising agency and said, "Hello, is David Cohen in?"

A voice replied, "No, it's Yom Kippur."

"Hi, Yom," I said cheerfully, "can I leave a message?"

He said "Yom Kippur's a Jewish holiday, That's not my name. **Humor Digest**

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Some time ago when Dr. W. A. Criswell was pastor of the First Baptist Church of Dallas Texas, he told how on an airplane flight he was sitting beside and visiting with a well-known theologian. The man told how he had lost a son who, one day, had come home from school with a fever that he and his wife thought was just a childhood sickness. Sadly it turned out to be meningitis. The doctor gave no hope for the boy's survival.

Near the end when the professor was sitting at his son's bedside, the child said, "Daddy, it's getting dark isn't it?"

The professor answered, "Yes, son, it is getting dark, very dark."

"Daddy, I guess it's time for me to go to sleep isn't it?" the boy continued.

"Yes, son, it's time for you to go to sleep."

As the child fixed the pillow on his bed as best he could in his weakened condition and, putting his head on his hands, said, "Good night, Daddy. I will see you in the morning."

Those were the last words the professor's son said as he closed his eyes in death and passed from this life to enter God's heaven.

For a long time, Dr. Criswell said, the professor just sat looking out the window of the airplane. Later he turned again and, looking at Dr. Criswell, with tears in his eyes, said, "Dr. Criswell, I can hardly wait till the morning." *Daily Encounter by Richard (Dick) Innes*

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If you're going to enjoy God's blessing as a family you must learn to cope with difficulties. So:

Try to remember that you're all on the same team. Don't take your frustrations out on your loved ones. Too often, home is where we go when we're tired of being 'nice'.

Before you speak, get the facts. Nothing's more damaging than jumping to conclusions. 'Those who control their tongue will have a long life; opening your mouth, inappropriately, can ruin everything'

Handle problems with wisdom. List all your options and you'll be more objective. That's how you'd handle a problem at work; why not do the same with your family?

Find something good in the situation. No matter how bad things seem, every situation holds something positive—look for it.

Make sure the family knows you love them. Express how you feel graciously. Think: when do you need God's love most? When do you deserve it least! Try to follow suit.

Cup O'Cheer

TUESDAY

John 19:7 ⁷*The Jews answered Pilate, "We have a law, and by that law Jesus must die because he claimed to be the Son of God."*

HOW TO CELEBRATE CHRIST'S BIRTHDAY

Dear children, It has come to my attention that many of you are upset that folks are taking My name out of the season. Maybe you've forgotten that I wasn't actually born during this time of the year and that it was some of your predecessors who decided to celebrate My birthday on what was actually a time of pagan festival. Although I do appreciate being remembered anytime.

How I personally feel about this celebration can probably be most easily understood by those of you who have been blessed with children of your own. I don't care what you call the day. If you want to celebrate My birth just, GET ALONG AND LOVE ONE ANOTHER. Now, having said that, let Me go on. If it bothers you that the town in which you live doesn't allow a nativity scene, then just get rid of a couple of Santa's and snowmen and put in a small Nativity scene on your own front lawn. If all My followers did that there wouldn't be any need for such a scene on the town square because there would be many of them all around town.

Stop worrying about the fact that people are calling the tree a holiday tree, instead of a Christmas tree. It was I who made all trees. You can & may remember Me anytime you see any tree. Decorate a grape vine if you wish: I actually spoke of that one in a teaching explaining who I am in relation to you & what each of our tasks were. If you have forgot that one, look up

If you want to give Me a present in remembrance of My birth here is my wish list. Choose something from it:

Instead of writing protest letters objecting to the way My birthday is being celebrated, write letters of love and hope to soldiers away from home. They are terribly afraid and lonely this time of year. I know, they tell Me all the time.

Visit someone in a nursing home. You don't have to know them personally. They just need to know that someone cares about them.

Instead of writing a businessman complaining about the wording on the Christmas cards his staff sent out this year, why don't you write and tell him that you'll be praying for him and his family this year. Then follow up. It will be nice hearing from you again.

Instead of giving your children a lot of gifts you can't afford and they don't need, spend time with them. Tell them the story of My birth, and why I came to live with you down here. Hold them in your arms and remind them that I love them.

Pick someone that has hurt you in the past and forgive him or her.

Be aware that some people in your town will attempt to take their own lives this season because they feel so alone and hopeless! Since you don't know who those people are, try giving everyone you meet a warm smile. It could make the difference.

Instead of nit picking about what the retailer in your town calls the holiday, be patient with the people who work there. Give them a warm smile and a kind word even if they aren't allowed to wish you a "Merry Christmas" that doesn't keep you from wishing them one. You also might consider not shopping there on Sunday. If the store didn't make so much money on that day they'd close and let their employees spend the day at home with their families.

There are individuals & whole families in your town who not only will have no "Christmas" tree, but neither will they have any presents to give or receive. If you don't know them (and I suspect you don't) buy some food & a few gifts & give them to the Salvation Army or some other charity which believes in Me & they will make the delivery for you.

Finally if you want to make a statement about your belief in and loyalty to Me, then behave like a Christian. Don't do things in secret that you wouldn't do in My presence. Let people know by your actions that you are one of mine.

P.S ~ Don't forget; I am God and can take care of Myself. Just love Me & do what I have told you to do. I'll take care of all the rest. Check out the advice above & get on it; time is short. I'll help you, but the ball is now in your court. And do have a most blessed Christmas with all those whom you love and remember I LOVE YOU -- *Author Unknown via E-Mail Ministry*

WEDNESDAY

John 19:8-9 ⁸ *When Pilate heard this, he became even more scared.* ⁹ *He went back into the palace and said to Jesus, "Where did you come from?" Jesus gave no answer*

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I don't want to sound simplistic as I have known times of loneliness when nothing seemed to take away the pain. But if you will be alone at Christmas time, for some it can help a little if you can reach out to help someone else who might be lonely, or call some people on the phone and wish them a happy Christmas. Or invite someone to your home for Christmas dinner, or contact your (or another local church) to see if they have a program for the lonely at Christmas that you could attend, or better still, that you could help with.

I would like to think that most churches put on a special family style dinner for the lonely at Christmas or have a program where members open their homes for the lonely during the holidays.

Daily Encounter

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A Rabbi was walking home from the Temple and saw one of his good friends, a pious and learned man who could usually beat the rabbi in religious arguments.

The rabbi started walking faster so that he could catch up to his friend, when he was horrified to see his friend go into a non kosher Chinese restaurant. Standing at the door, he observed his friend talking to a

waiter and gesturing at a menu. A short time later, the waiter reappeared carrying a platter full of spare ribs, shrimp in lobster sauce, crab rangoon and other treif that the Rabbi could not bear to think about.

As his friend picked up the chopsticks and began to eat this food, the Rabbi burst into the restaurant and reproached his friend, for he could take it no longer. "Morris, what is this you are doing? I saw you come into this restaurant, order this filth and now you are eating it in violation of everything we are taught about the dietary laws and with an apparent enjoyment that does not befit your pious reputation!"

Morris replied, "Rabbi, did you see me enter this restaurant?"

The Rabbi nods yes.

"Did you see me order this meal?"

Again he nods yes.

"Did you see the waiter bring me this food?"

Again he nods yes.

"And did you see me eat it?"

The Rabbi nods yes.

"Then, Rabbi, I don't see the problem here. The entire meal was done under Rabbinical supervision."

Cybersalt

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"Why were so many Civil War battles fought in national parks?" *Cybersalt*

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When the subject of heaven and hell was broached in conversation one day, Ernest Hemingway politely declined to offer any opinion. "Excuse me for not answering," he said. "I have friends in both places."

THURSDAY

John 19:10-11 ¹⁰ Pilate said, "You won't talk? Don't you know that I have the authority to pardon you, and the authority to—crucify you?" ¹¹ Jesus said, "You haven't a shred of authority over me except what has been given you from heaven. That's why the one who betrayed me to you has committed a far greater fault."

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Since it started snowing all my husband has done is look through the steamed-up window...if it gets any worse I'll have to let him in! *Humor Digest*

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If you have food in your refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof over your head, and a place to sleep; all at the same time; you are rich in this world *Laugh & Lift*

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CHILDREN'S LETTERS TO GOD

Dear GOD, I read the Bible. What does begat mean? Nobody will tell me. Love, Alison

Dear GOD, Did you mean for the giraffe to look like that or was it an accident? -Norma

Dear GOD, Instead of letting people die and having to make new ones, why don't You just keep the ones You have now? -Jane

Dear GOD, I went to this wedding and they kissed right in church. Is that okay? -Neil

Dear GOD, Did you really mean "do unto others as they do unto you"? Because if you did, then I'm going to fix my brother. -Darla

Dear GOD, Thank you for the baby brother, but what I prayed for was a puppy. -Joyce

Dear GOD, It rained for our whole vacation and is my father mad! He said some things about You that people are not supposed to say, but I hope You will not hurt him anyway. Your friend (But I am not going to tell you who I am)

Dear GOD, Why is Sunday school on Sunday? I thought it was supposed to be our day of rest. -Tom L.

Dear GOD, Please send me a pony. I never asked for anything before, You can look it up. -Bruce

Dear GOD, If You give me a genie lamp like Aladdin, I will give you anything you want, except my money or my chess set. -Raphael

Dear GOD, Maybe Cain and Abel would not kill each other so much if they had their own rooms. It works with my brother. -Larry

Dear GOD, You don't have to worry about me. I always look both ways. -Dean

Dear GOD, I think the stapler is one of your greatest inventions. -Ruth M.

Dear GOD, Of all the people who work for You I like Noah and David the best. -Rob

Dear GOD, My brother told me about being born but it doesn't sound right. They're just kidding, aren't they? -Marsha

Dear GOD, I would like to live 900 years like the guy in the Bible. Love, Chris

Dear GOD, We read Thomas Edison made light. But in school they said You did it. So I bet he stole your idea. Sincerely, Donna

FRIDAY

John 19:12 ¹² *At this, Pilate tried his best to pardon him, but the Jews shouted him down: "If you pardon this man, you're no friend of Caesar's. Anyone setting himself up as 'king' defies Caesar."*

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Let's unwrap today some of the awesome gifts God has given us ...
He's given us *physical life*: And *eternal life* He's given us *family*: He's given us *wisdom*:
He's given us *peace*: He's given us *joy*: He's given us *rest*: He's given us a
personal counselor.
He's given us *an inheritance*:" And He's given us *freedom*:

In return for all these glorious gifts, God simply wants us to receive and respond with thankfulness and a heart that is ready to emulate His gracious nature. I can't think of a better time than now to respond with gratefulness and enjoy the act of giving and receiving - Merry Christmas!
Encouragement for Today

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REJECTED SLOGAN FOR THE TSA - Can't see London, can't see France, unless we see your underpants. *Mark's Musings*

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The Santa Claus at the shopping mall was very surprised when a young lady about 20 years old walked up and sat on his lap.

Now, we all know that Santa doesn't usually take requests from adults, but she smiled very nicely at him, so he asked her, "What do you want for Christmas?"

"Something for my mother, please," the young lady replied sweetly.

"Something for your mother? Well, that's very loving and thoughtful of you," smiled Santa. "What would you like me to bring her?"

Without missing a beat, she answered quickly, "A son-in-law."
Humor Digest

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Melody and her thirteen-year-old sister Karen, had been fighting a lot this year. This happens when you combine a headstrong two-year-old, who is sure she is always right, with a young adolescent.

Melody's parents, trying to take advantage of her newfound interest in Santa Claus, reminded the two-year-old that Santa was watching and doesn't like it when children fight. This had little impact.

"I'll just have to tell Santa about your misbehavior," their mother said as she picked up the phone and dialed. Melody's eyes grew big as her mother asked Mrs. Claus if she could put Santa on the line.

Melody's mouth dropped open as Mom described to Santa how the two-year-old was acting. But, when Mom said that Santa wanted to talk to her, she reluctantly took the phone.

Santa, (really her uncle), in a deep voice, explained to her how there would be no presents Christmas morning to children who fought with their sisters. He would be watching, he told her, and he expected things to be better from now on.

Melody, now even more wide eyed, solemnly nodded to each of Santa's remarks and silently hung the

phone up when he was done.

After a long moment, Mom, holding in her laughter, asked, "What did Santa say to you, dear?"

In almost a whisper, Melody sadly but matter-of-factly stated, "Santa said he won't be bringing toys to Karen sister this year." *Humor Digest*