

Distractions

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Getting ready for a big Christmas family gathering means many preparations. Getting the meal(s) ready, buying presents, decorating the home, planning seasonal activities, having parties with co-workers, and arranging to attend a Christmas service as a family can all become time-consuming and sources of great distraction from the essence of what Christmas is to be.

Many in the Judeo-Christian world have become disenchanted with Christmas because it has become such a materialistic and commercial holiday. For them, Christmas no longer represents the celebration of a Saviour who has come to buy back humanity from sin to return forever with our Creator. As a result, for many people

Christmas has lost its joy and peace and is even being exchanged with the thrill and excitement of Hallowe'en which is becoming more and more gruesome.

How did it come to this, and how can we stop it? I admit I easily fall prey to the temptation of becoming preoccupied and distracted with Christmas preparations and having things just right. Jesus addressed Martha and the rest of us when He said, "Martha, you are worried and upset about many things, but only

one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better and it won't be taken away from her" (Luke 10:40). Here, though Jesus doesn't tell Mary to get up and help Martha (in the kitchen), He doesn't deny the fact there are preparations to do. He wants us to cling to Him with full confidence for whatever we will face. He knows our daily agenda before we do and

than the world does—and not just at Christmas time.

Just like Jesus who used God's word successfully as a shield against Satan's temptations in the desert, we use God's word as He reminds us to "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). In this psalm the Lord wants us to know we can be at peace with Him and our environment, even

when there are natural disasters like earthquakes, volcanoes, tsunamis, and world conflicts like wars! The Lord is bigger than all our worries and distractions; He is our ever-present help in time of trouble. God helps us stop the running hamster in our brain when, in love, He demands we trust Him first above all others: "You shall have no other gods before me" (First Commandment).



promises to accompany us always.

"Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5).

This is His year-round desire for us—that we trust Him intimately. When we do this, the world will know we Christians aren't there just to make a show with how many gifts and meals and decorations we can make. Rather our trust and confidence in our Heavenly Father's love and mercy shines through our daily living so people notice that we act, speak and love people differently

Closing Prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father, You created us to have union with You. You love our souls and not our stuff. Please keep us mindful as we prepare to receive our families, be with friends and worship You this Advent and Christmas season. May our Christmas preparations accent those we are and who loves us: our Heavenly Father. In Jesus' name, amen.

Prepared by the Christian Growth Committee, LWML—Canada