



# BIBLEWAY MINISTRIES

MAKING A DIFFERENCE—THE BIBLE WAY



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It started during the beginning of October, right before Halloween, with sightings of Christmas being confirmed even before Thanksgiving. When Thanksgiving Day arrived, it was soon interrupted by the shopping frenzy of Black Friday. Stores racked up monumental sales over the weekend, with even more revenues generated on Cyber Monday. Registers jingled as sales continued through the entire week. Great shopping was had by all, to each merchant's delight.

In spite of our Christmas frenzy, something is not right! We are fatigued, stressed out, and exhausted, with no joy in sight. Our shopping is almost completed; our gifts nicely wrapped and deposited under the Christmas tree. But the season never ends quite like we thought it would.

When writer Joe Bunting asked people to share their thoughts about Christmas, he expected to hear variations of Andy Williams' "It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year." Instead, he was told resentful stories about growing old, comparisons with happier Christmases, and stories about cancer and other illnesses experienced during the holidays. Bunting got everything but stories of Christmas being the most wonderful time of the year. Surprisingly, there was not much joy or satisfaction!

Like the people Joe interviewed, we hear the music in the stores and see the decorations that have sprung up over our city, but our hearts are not moved. We are left wanting without satisfaction! As the words to the 1964 Rolling Stones song go,

"I can't get no satisfaction, I can't get no satisfaction  
'Cause I try and I try and I try and I try..."

We thought our highest level of satisfaction would be reached if we found the best deals before Christmas so we could relax and raise our tired feet! But we can't get no satisfaction!

During Christmastime, we give gifts to each other in recognition of the wonderful gift of God's own Son who was given to us. But now, Christmas is more about us and less about Him. As a result, although Christmas should be a wonderful time of the year, many feel like those who lived in the little town of Whoville that were robbed by the Grinch.

In the Gospel of Luke, we are told about the shepherds who routinely watched their flock in the fields each night. Perhaps they took turns during their watch lest the sheep were harmed by wild animals. The first Christmas night appeared no different to them than other nights had before. But something changed their routine. Amidst the backdrop of darkness that was haunting in the night, an angel of the Lord appeared. (Luke 2:8-20) To calm their uneasiness and ease their fear, he said, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."

As the story continues, the shepherds left early — but not in search of Black Friday deals at Wal-mart, Kohl's, or Macy's. Their journey ended at a small cave used as a shelter for livestock. There they saw the babe lying in a manger as described by the angel. No purchase was necessary, for what they had received . . . >>> [Keep Reading](#)





**A** man is looking at a photograph of someone. His friend asks who it is. The man replies, “Brothers and sisters, I have none. But that man’s father is my father’s son.” Who was in the photograph?

Brain teasers are fun and mentally stimulating (you’ll have to read through to the end for the answer to this one). Sometimes they strike a nerve because they remind us of our mental limitations. Still, we embrace them because we hope they will help us improve our memory.

Memory is more than a game; it’s a multi-billion-dollar industry. Over \$200 billion is spent annually on mental health conditions in the US. Medical researchers are always searching for cures to the most infamous mental diseases: Alzheimer’s disease and dementia.

Recently scientists have developed an experimental brain vaccine which may undergo clinical trial on humans. The drug aims to curb the development of Alzheimer’s and dementia, extend life expectancy, and possibly even cut the number of dementia cases in half. If this new drug works, losing our memory with age may soon become as commonplace as S & H green stamps (if you can remember that far back!).

### Steer Clear of the Holi-Daze

For all the emphasis we put on preventing memory loss, it’s amazing how quickly we fail to remember what is most important in life. Consider how quickly we jumped from Thanksgiving to Black Friday. Before the last remnants of turkey had been consumed and the dinner table wiped clean, we joined the throngs which descended upon retailers like a pack of vultures on a fresh carcass.

What’s wrong with us? We’re communicating a mixed message. On the one hand, we express how thankful we are for everything we have and acknowledge God as the Source of our blessings; on the other, we shop as if the goods for which we just gave thanks are not enough, as if Thanksgiving was only meant to be celebrated on the last Thursday in November when the family is over at our house — the moment after they leave through the end of Black Friday being reserved for shopping. This compartmentalization indicates we have forgotten true Thanksgiving in our efforts to prepare for Christmas.

Without Christmas there would be no Thanksgiving, yet Christmas is meaningless without it. The two are inseparable, and we can’t forget this.

Without the gift of God’s Son, we would have no hope beyond our immediate circumstances for which to give

thanks. Likewise, without a grateful realization of the implications of Christ’s birth, Christmas itself becomes a meaningless holiday.

### Fresh Perspective before the Holi-Dash

Take a break from your Christmas shopping for a day, grab a seat cushion, and find a strategic spot in a mall where you can sit and watch people. Really! The expression on their faces as they enter and exit the stores is a snapshot of their hearts. Most have forgotten what Christmas is all about, their ideal for the holiday defined by how many stores they’ve shopped, how much they’ve purchased, how much money they’ve saved, how well they’ve hosted, how many presents they’ve wrapped, how many cookies they’ve baked (or bypassed), how well the guests enjoyed their company, and how closely the numbers on their bathroom scales after Christmas resemble the numbers they saw before the holiday madness. . . . [>> Keep Reading](#)



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