

## Daily Devotional, December 22, 2020 What Christmas Myths Can Teach Us

***<sup>6</sup> When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, "Surely the Lord's anointed stands here before the Lord." <sup>7</sup> But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." 1 Samuel 16:6-7 (NIV)***

At this time of year, it really is true - as Ray Stephens sang of Santa Claus in a popular song some years ago - "he's everywhere! He's everywhere!" There are chocolate Santas, inflatable giant Santas, surfing Santas, aviator Santas - you name it. It all started "once upon a time" in the 4th Century. A church bishop named Nicholas went around giving gifts to the poor around him - becoming the original "St. Nick."

In the same manner, the mythical Santa / St. Nicholas / St. Nick gives presents to children around the world, in a spirit of generosity. It really is true isn't it, that Christmas often brings out the generous spirit in people? Santa is a touching reminder of God's instructions by way of Christ, Paul and others, to live generously. We should follow Charles Dickens' example when he wrote, "I will honor Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year."

In addition, we can learn that there are no secrets. Someone really is watching to see if we are "naughty or nice." No, it's not Santa, but God is watching us 24/7. God is literally present with us everywhere. Every time someone goes into an x-rated movie, God is there. If we go into a bar and drink until we're inebriated, God is there. If we tell a dirty joke or a racist one, God is there listening. If someone is robbing, beating, or killing someone, God is there. God knows all and sees all. We should never go anywhere that we don't want God to go with us—or do anything we'd be ashamed or frightened of that God might observe. For there are no secrets we could ever keep from God.

And quite honestly—the world is watching, as well. Children learn more from what we do than what we say. Whether we like it or not, we are all role models for those people who look up to us in our worlds. Everything we do and say should reflect our heritage as priceless children of God. As the cliché reminds us, "you may be the only Bible someone ever reads."

We are also reminded by the song "*Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*" that God has a purpose for everyone, and that we should not mock or dismiss people because of their appearance. We should never deride one of God's precious children because of their weight, height, color, birthmark, nose size, or anything else. When we mock anyone, we are mocking someone Christ gave His life for. Much of this world is obsessed with appearance, which explains the rise of liposuction, facelifts, botox, and eating disorders. But God does not look at it the way the world does. Let us all be most thankful for that!

While it is true that Santa Clause is mythical, he still has much to teach us!

***Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for watching over us and being with us every step of the way. I ask You to change those things in my life that offend You. Remove any spirit in me that is not of you. I want more of you in my life and less of what the world tells me I must have. I ask that you fill me up with all that is worthy and good and may that goodness spill out into the lives of those I encounter each day. In the name of Jesus, who is born in my heart. Amen.***