DON’T SAY THAT WORD!

I am going to mention that word. Even though I am so reluctant to do so I am going to say it. That word is Christmas. I am so reluctant to even mention that word for Christmas is a time of year when people seem to lose all perspective on life. People spend too much; get far too excited; eat and drink too much and most importantly we forget the person of Christmas, Jesus Christ.

We can get so carried away with all that surrounds Christmas that we lose all sense of perspective and meaning on what we say we are celebrating. So I thought I would consider one principle that will help us to focus on what Christmas is really all about and that principle is found in James 4:7. But it is not just a principle for Christmas but for everyday of our lives. What is this principle? It is that we need to learn to submit to God. This is a principle that is not very popular especially at this time of year.

Submission is never a popular thing in people’s minds, we see rebellion taking place all the time; within our families, in our Schools and places of work and in our community. No one likes to submit to authority which is why we get frustrated when we drive our cars and have to go at a certain speed. The world is full of violence disturbances and even bloodshed all because of man’s failure to submit to authority. We live in an age when arrogance abounds and assertion and self seeking is encouraged. The slogan of today is "assert yourself" rather than submit yourself.

Sadly most people celebrate Christmas in the way that they want too and no one ever seems to stop and ask if this way is in keeping with how it should be. As for God; well He is never even thought about and what He desires is not even considered. Even though Christmas is about Christ; it seems no one asks how He wants us to celebrate Christmas. He wants us to submit to God and that submission will affect how we celebrate Christmas for we will want to do things that are God honouring and God pleasing. In other words; submission to God will at least lead us to ask the question concerning how we should celebrate Christmas. Should we celebrate it differently from all those around us who seem to have no limitations on their excesses? We will submit to him in how we use our time; how we spend our money; and on what we focus on at this time of year. What is it that we are looking forward most this Christmas? Is it the time off work for those of us who get time off? Is it the cooking and eating of the Christmas dinner? Is it time spent with our families?

Perhaps for children it is the receiving of presents or for some it is what they call the romance of Christmas with all the decorations and trimmings that many people invest their time in. But Christmas is all about Christ; so we ought to be looking forward to thinking about and mediating upon Christ. We ought to be thinking about spending time in his presence and with his people and enjoying the wonder of pondering the incarnation once again.

Yet sadly most of us can go through Christmas without really thinking about the meaning of Christmas and the wonder of Christ’s incarnation. We can become more excited with opening our presents than we are with Jesus Christ. We may look forward more to our Christmas dinner than we do to going to church in order to think about Jesus Christ. We can spend Christmas Day watching our TV’s and never cast a thought to Jesus and never think about reading his word; the Bible or singing his praise in Christmas Carols. Submitting to God also means submitting our minds to him and therefore we all have to fight to keep our minds focused on what really is important rather than on what we think is important. Let’s be honest does it really matter, if we can’t afford to buy the presents we want to buy? Does it matter if our Christmas dinner does not turn out as hoped? Does it really matter if our family can’t be with us for Christmas? Yes we may desire certain things at this time of year; but all that matters is Jesus Christ; therefore Christmas Day is a day of celebrating the reason for his birth; that is, that He came to save his people from their sin. I would suggest to you that this is what it means to submit to God at Christmas.