

## Parents Who Demand Their Adult Children Spend Holidays With Them

During the holiday season, many people have traditions that are extremely important to them. So important in fact, that often they treat the traditions as more important than people in their lives, & even more important than God.

You may think I'm over reacting, but think about it for a moment. Many people, narcissists in particular, demand their adult children spend the holiday with them, even if he or she is married & has children of their own, & will be furious if they don't. Their wants come before everyone else's. My ex's parents demanded we drive the hour to their family Christmas get together even knowing we were having car trouble one year. This was before cell phones became commonplace, so it was a scary drive, wondering if we'd get stuck on the side of a major highway with no means of calling for help!

If your parents or in-laws aren't like this, count your blessings, because many are. Not only have I experienced it but many of my friends & readers have too.

While talking about this topic with a friend recently, something occurred to me. Not only is this just a mean thing to do to someone, it's also not Biblical.

In Matthew chapter 19 verse 5 & 6, Jesus said, ***"..For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."*** To quote Jesus, it really can tear a couple asunder when one's parents demand the couple spend the holiday with them & ignore the couple's desires. Maybe that sounds overly dramatic to some, but it's true. It creates a tremendous amount of stress & arguments when this happens. My husband & I fought a lot about holidays over the years. Sometimes we still do even though I haven't spent a holiday with his family in over 15 years.

Another point to consider: many people want to celebrate the birth of Jesus at Christmas. How are you celebrating Him if your primary concern is forcing people to attend your Christmas party or worrying about placating a demanding parent by attending that party? Matthew 10:37 states, ***"He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me."*** While loving people & wanting to spend time with them is a very good thing of course, no one can be more important to you than Jesus!

Rather than fight & suffer your way through the holidays, there are some possible solutions that may work for you.

You can tell the demanding parents that although you & your spouse want to celebrate the holiday with them, you decided to spend it at home this year. You'd like to get together the day before or after, or maybe the weekend before or after, whatever works for you. Give them some options & let them choose which works for

them. Some folks may not like this, especially if they're narcissists, but that isn't your responsibility. It's a very reasonable request on your part!

You can suggest something my grandparents did for Christmas. Rather than have the big family party on Christmas day, they had it the Sunday after Christmas. That way, Christmas day was free for everyone to spend at home or visiting friends or other family members. As an adult, I realize how much sense this made! So what if the holiday isn't celebrated on the actual day so long as it's celebrated? Doing this relieves a great deal of stress from everyone.

If you're in the position like I am of having a spouse who insists on spending holidays with his family no matter what, I know this is hard. It hurts being put on the back burner. One thing I often try to do is treat the holiday like it's any other day. I stick to my normal schedule as much as possible. That makes it feel like it's not a holiday, which means it hurts less that he's not home. I've also done things to make it a nice day for me & thought of it as a goof off day. Some years I've picked up dinner from a local Chinese restaurant since they're usually open on holidays, worked on writing in a new book, focused on a crafty project.. little things I really enjoy doing make the day feel more pleasant.

Whatever you opt to do for the holidays, I wish you a very happy holiday season & the best of luck with the demanding parents!