

CHRISTIAN MONEY \$ENSE

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It's A Wonderful Life

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Have you ever seen Frank Capra's movie, "It's A Wonderful Life"? I'm not sure how you could miss it since it is played every Christmas on television. James Stewart stars as George Bailey, a small-town man whose life seems so desperate that he contemplates suicide. He always wanted to leave his hometown (Bedford Falls), but circumstances and his love for his family prevented this. As he contemplates jumping from a bridge, a guardian angel intercedes, showing him what life would have become for the residents of Bedford Falls if he had never been born.

I don't endorse every aspect of the worldview portrayed in this movie, but overall I enjoy it and watch it every year. It is very thought provoking to contemplate the number of people we impact even when we do not realize it.

Question: What would life be if Jesus had never been born? While we can't know for sure, there are some important elements.

- Forget the Christmas carols, decorations, and presents. Thankfully, we could get rid of cranberries (which I do not like), but we would also have to get rid of my children's Christmas stockings (which I do like).
- If you got sick, you could not go to a hospital. Christians established these centuries ago as a way to imitate their Savior and help the needy.
- Don't worry about the decision of what to do after high school. You would work. Christians were instrumental in bringing about the university system in Europe.
- You would be perpetually unable to live a holy life. You would not have a new nature or the Holy Spirit to help you live a holy life (Eph 1:13-14).

- You would live in constant fear of God. His judgment would be certain. There would be no perfect sacrifice for sin, so He would be unable to forgive you.
- You would live to please yourself. Your time, money and talents would simply be consumed on your own desires. There would be no reason to do otherwise.

May I ask you a penetrating question? The last point - using your time, money and talents on yourself - does that describe your current outlook on life? What would be the testimony of your calendar and checkbook? Are you living as if Christ did not come?

Sometimes that is how I live. I have a feeling I'm not alone. I begin to live like I own everything, and my money is merely a tool to please me. I forget that because Christ came (and will be coming again), I must spend my money differently.

This Christmas I am training my girls to give to needy children. I want them to have a Christmas list and a "giving list" so that they will understand how to meet the needs of others. It has been a marvelous teaching tool and has caused some spiritual renewal in our home. Christ's coming can demand nothing less than a changed life.

There are a number of ministries, including Baptist Bible College & Seminary, that desire to tell the world about the coming of the Savior. Choose to make a special gift to a ministry this year-end. May your giving reflect His coming (1 Tim 6:17-19).

BBC Foundation has been ministering to churches and individuals regarding biblical stewardship since 1992. Send your questions on finances and stewardship to: BBC Foundation, 538 Venard Rd., Clarks Summit, PA 18411. Phone: (800) 451-8668, website: bbcfoundation.org; e-mail: info@bbcfoundation.org