

hurt and loneliness, the longing to see them. The court proceedings have not gone well, it's a mess. The holidays intensify your pain. You see other families interact with joy and gladness these days while you hurt. It is very difficult. Some of you may have to endure or resolve strained family relationships. The holidays can be particularly painful for you. Your son or daughter may have strayed considerably from you and the Lord. Anger, hostility, resentments and unforgiveness pull you down; even though you really long for healing, reconciliation and harmony. You have to work at keeping a positive attitude when you feel this way. Some of you may be struggling with an alcohol or drug addiction which makes you extremely vulnerable this time of the year. You know how the holidays can precipitate a relapse. You have to be very careful. You may have already relapsed. The list of hard time goes on and on. The holidays can intensify the pain of divorce, death, sickness, and financial problems. You see people appearing happy and excited over the holidays. You miss your loved ones. The holidays can mark the anniversary of a family member or friend's death. This may be the first time without them. You may have lost someone during these holidays. Don't isolate yourself..., run for help! God will help you bear this burden. Let Him. Some people were so stressed financially during the holidays that they could not even buy one gift. The weight of debt is overwhelming. They are on the verge of losing their

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home. You may be out of work. Hold fast, God will come through.

### **Afterwards...**

You may feel bad about how the holidays went, but relieved that they are over. You wish, hope, and pray they will be better next year. You might miss the closeness you experienced visiting family over the holidays. The bitter sweet feelings linger. You are happy for the good time you shared, and relieved that the stress of the holidays is gone. Thank God for the good times, challenges, even the bad times you just experienced. Hold onto the good memories. Yes, thank the Lord for everything, *hardships included*. Count your blessings and learn from your hardships. You may also have just gone through the roughest times of your life, where you're expectations went unmet, you experienced let downs, disappointments, and disasters. You go to God and ask "Why?". We all have these residual thoughts and feelings after the holidays. We want to hold on to the good and let go of the bad. It's not easy.

### **What should you do now?**

How do you cope now that the holidays are over? You may feel worse now than before the holidays began. You may just be exhausted and need to take some serious time off resting your mind and body. This will get you ready to apply the following: Regroup. Don't take on any major projects until you have had time to recover. Give yourself a least a week or two before you resume your

normal pace. Build up gradually to the healthy momentum you need to live a productive life. Clear your mind. Get back into your routines. Remain in the Word. Pray. Guard your quiet time with the Lord. Call on Christ to help you move into the new year without stressing. Allow yourself time to heal and recover from any problems resulting from the holidays. Make a list of things that bother you and bring your list to God. Let Him know you need help and don't want to hold onto the problems, grievances, anger, resentment, and un-forgiveness. He will help you, this is His specialty. Address the issues, don't bury them. Talk to your good friends. Bring these things up with people you trust. Let them pray for you. Seek people out who understand your situation, people who can comfort and support you through the post holiday blues. Seek Professional Christian help if you remain in a serious rut. Whatever you do, don't wait too long to implement a recovery plan. Monitor your progress. It may be that you just need a little rest to get back on track. Don't go too fast either. Try to understand what it was about the holidays that left you down now. Take a hard look at those things you cannot change and strongly consider letting them go. You can't make people do what they really need to do in their relationships. Don't burn yourself out trying to get someone to change when they are unmotivated or unwilling. You may have to leave them alone for a while. This approach seems harsh but it

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may bring them to their senses.

Remember the good coming out of the holidays. You're alive! You were able to reflect on the true meaning of the holidays. Rescue the positive. Also allow yourself to grieve the loss of certain family and friends. Allow yourself to be sad for a season. Let the process continue as long as you need to recover. For those of you struggling with loneliness after the holidays, make it a point to do something. Step out of your cave. Do your part to reach out to God and His people. He will do His part. Call someone, invite them out for coffee. For those of you agonizing over strained relationships, open yourself to God, ask Him to help you forgive. Commit the process of forgiveness to Him. He will do His part. He will also help you set boundaries when appropriate. You must take the first step. God knows your problems. Commit them to Him. Give Him your financial troubles. Ask for a breakthrough and then look for the openings when He does show you the way, through circumstances, people or when He speaks directly to your spirit. Obey Him. The same goes for those struggling with addictions. You don't want this year to be like the rest. Bring your burden to Christ, let Him carry you through the healing process. It won't be easy but it will be worth it. Get help and stick to a recovery plan. Commit your plans to Him and they will succeed (Psalm 37:5). Submit all your problems, especially those magnified by the holidays, to God. He wants to use you for His Glory.

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## God's Hope.

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose." (Romans 8:28). God specializes in helping His people. He will take your greatest hardship and purify you into holiness for Him. Nothing is impossible with God. (Luke 1:37). He is not silent. He is not powerless. He loves you! He loved you enough to send His only begotten son to redeem you (John 3:16). He watches over you. He plans to give you hope and a future (Jeremiah 29:11). He will never leave you nor forsake you (Heb. 13:5). Remember His promises if you find yourself burned out and saddened after the holidays. Let Him renew your strength and enable you to mount up with wings as eagles. You will run and not be weary, you will walk and not be faint. (Isaiah 40:31). Let your soul find rest in God alone (Psalm 62:1). He wants to grow you. He empowers you to move beyond the holidays. He may want to use the holidays to move you into making changes. He wants you to trust Him. Believe that He is able to help you change for the better and make you a tremendous blessing. He will sustain you when you trust Him. He brings you through life! There is no pressure because Christ is carrying you. He is taking you to what's next in your life. Let Him. Focus on Him. There is a cloud of witnesses cheering you on (Heb. 12:1). Run with perseverance. Christ intercedes for you. May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with

hope by the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:13). The Eternal Lord Christ loves you. God bless you. His peace be with you. Shalom.

# F.Y.I.

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