

THE COUNSELOR

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AFTER THE HOLIDAYS

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The Holidays are over. You may have that great satisfaction and contentment of having really enjoyed the warmth and company of your family. You thank God that things went so well, and you feel blessed. Some of you may have mixed feelings, the holidays *were* joyful, full of laughter, excitement and reunions, but also contained moments of frustration, anger, sadness, and disappointment. The holidays can be extremely difficult for those grieving a lost parent, child, spouse or friend. You may feel relieved that the holidays are over. Remember the anticipation and flurry of activity leading up to the holidays, all the planning involved. This included all the meals, trips to the airport, phone calls, shopping, and so forth. Each family has its own tradition on how they celebrate the holidays. It's a time of year for giving, counting our blessings, for remembering the "reason for the season." Christ came into the world to redeem us. He came as the God-Man in human form to bring hope and salvation to a lost and dying world. We have a future because of Him. Still, the holidays can be so exhausting,

so full of tension, strife, conflict, and sadness. Holiday memories are not always pleasant. The holidays can usher in new beginnings for some. It's a brand new year! However, most people have some form of let down, fatigue, uneasiness, emptiness and longing after the holidays. Some people experience the post 'holiday blues'.

Good Times

The holidays are usually good for those people doing well. You have money in the bank, no major illnesses, and your children are well behaved. Your relationship with the Lord is going well too. You are grateful. You look at your life and the little problems, annoyances, and irritations seem small compared to your neighbor whose husband just left her after 21 years, or your boss who died suddenly of a heart attack at 42 leaving a wife and four children. You watch CNN and see the sadness and hardship that prevails this time of the year, and you count your blessings: "Thank you, Lord that we were able to give to others out of the bounty you have given us; for our mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual well being. We are grateful." But we know that life will eventually deal its blows to us. We know that our world is temporary and that we will

experience sickness, hardship, and death. Thank God for the times we did spend with our children, grandchildren, parents and grandparents. They will not always be around. I know that there are many of you out there who have had a great holiday and are extremely grateful. God has been good to you. He will remain faithful to you no matter what lies ahead.

Hard Times

The holidays were rough for those who have been struggling. Nothing seemed to go right. The past year has been nothing but frustrations, disappointments, and heartaches. You have had that reoccurring illness that just won't go away. Some of you are struggling with a serious physical illness which makes getting around very difficult. You ache all over. You just can't find relief. The pain and worry consume you. It's very hard to be upbeat. You may be struggling with a life threatening illness or worse, have been given little hope from the doctors. Others may be struggling with chronic depression, bipolar disorder, or some other form of mental illness which literally incapacitates you altogether. Others are in the middle of a divorce, your visitation rights are stalled, you miss your children deeply, you feel the