

The After Christmas Lull

The house looked like a tornado zone – but in a good way. Wrapping paper was strewn everywhere. Opened Christmas gifts were all stacked in separate piles near the tree. Each pile represented a person who received love from others. Dirty pots and pans littered the kitchen sink, after a wonderful meal with our extended family. The place was a mess, but we look around and know we have been blessed on this special day. That was just two days ago, on Christmas Day.

Two days later, the euphoria of Christmas is wearing off and we settle for a reality much different than Christmas Day. The dried out Christmas tree may have already made its way to the curb, as people transition from stressful preparation, busyness and joy to the unknown of the New Year. People still on vacation take frequent naps, not just because they have the time but because they are exhausted from all of the Christmas preparation. Visiting family have already loaded up their car and started the long drive home to another part of the country. The house, and our life, is anything but normal at this time.

During the after-Christmas letdown, nerves can become frayed. Counselors tell us the days immediately after Christmas are the most stressful of the year. Perhaps not all family members were able to join us at Christmas. Some people were alone at what should have been the most festive day of the year. Maybe a loved one is no longer with us, and there is a big “hole in our heart” because of their absence. We wish we could have been with them just one more time. Perhaps not everything went according to plan. Somewhere along the line someone said something, unintended, that made other people mad. The gift under the tree wasn’t exactly what you wanted. Maybe the rolls burned, threatening to ruin an otherwise great meal. With the house still in shambles, it is easy to fly off the handle at a moment’s notice.



Somewhere in this whole holiday process we forgot the euphoria of the special Christmas services at church. Just a couple of days ago we sang favorite Christmas carols at the top of our lungs. The sermon was one of the best of the year. The sanctuary bathed in candlelight and a soothing Silent Night brought warmth to our heart. We saw people at church we had not seen in a while. We received enthusiastic hugs from special friends and family. Church at Christmas was a special occasion, celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ – our personal Savior. Satan was nowhere to be seen or felt, stuck outside while inside we worshipped the new born baby, Jesus Christ. We left the church on a “high” and with great anticipation of time with family.

Let that good feeling carry you through all the disappointments and imperfections of everyday life. After all, Jesus came into the world to change everything. He taught us how to love. He came to give us hope for an eternal future, but also hope for a everyday life of forgiveness from all our shortcomings. We have a common Savior – you and the person who said something that upset you. Jesus came to relieve us of the burdens that drag us down. Jesus desires we live a life of genuine happiness.

But, then something bad happens. Satan slips in when we are down, trying to ruin all the good that happened at Christmas. It doesn’t have to be that way. Don’t let him in! Resist the possibility of a letdown by remembering what Jesus brings us.

Let the high you felt on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day guide and point you to even more hope for the future. How do we do this? Forgive yourself and others when things don’t go right. Let Jesus’ life make a difference in your outlook on life, especially in how you handle the stressful or disappointing times. When you accept Jesus into your life you are a new person. Know that the loved one who has passed on is in a better place, celebrating on our behalf, in the presence of Jesus himself. Enjoy the changed life Jesus offers, to make you the best person you can be. A new Kingdom was born and we are included in its riches. Let us celebrate the euphoria all year.

Scripture: *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! (2 Corinthians 5:17).*

Question: How do you repel the times after Christmas when Satan is trying to use that opportunity to take away the hope, love, joy, and peace of Christmas?

Prayer: Dear Lord. We worship you, not only at Christmas, but throughout the year. We pray for your help as we handle the down times. You came into the world to give us hope for a life fulfilled with your promises. Your kingdom has come. Amen.