

2 Foolproof Ways to Burst Out of Your Spiritual Winter

The in-between times can often be one of the most challenging. The Christmas celebrations are over. The New Year is not quite here. For many of us, long weeks or months of winter weather lie ahead.

The emotional letdown after a holiday can be difficult. Perhaps your expectations were met, but you're still wondering, "Is that all there is?" Or you're trying to take a breath after a whirlwind of activity. Or you may be relieved that the holiday season is just about over.

Holidays and celebrations are good. We need them. God directed His people to set aside times for gathering together, celebrating the past and looking forward to the future.

But we don't live there all the time. We can't. Our human psyche was not built to sustain that level of intensity.

So we're left with "What now?" It's a very long time until Christmas next year. How do we go about living today, tomorrow, and the next day? How do we keep going in the in-between times?

The End of the Beginning

In 1942, after one of the most challenging battles in Britain during World War II, Winston Churchill famously said, "Now this is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning."

We don't know how close we truly are to the final end. But we know we're closer than when Winston Churchill said that famous line. We're closer than we were last Christmas. And we may be closer than we realize. For us, it's certainly beyond "the end of the beginning." Many believe—perhaps rightly—that we are at

“the beginning of the end.”

It's possible we have spent our very last Christmas on Earth.

And when it comes down to it, I'd be fine with that. 2016 had enough trouble for all of us. 2017 holds both promise and danger. But if this is the year God puts an end to this whole earthly mess? Wouldn't that be a wonderful thing?

What to Do in the In-Between

Since we know the end of the story, how are we to live in 2017 and however long this world continues?

Among all the recommendations for how to make 2017 your best year ever, there are two things I believe are most important:

1. Pay attention to the everyday stuff.

The little things matter. What you eat for breakfast. Brushing your teeth. Kissing your spouse or children. Balancing your checkbook. Reading an educational or inspirational book. The ways in which you are generous or kind. Going to church. Reading your Bible. Spending some quality alone-time with God.

Success in your physical health, your mental health, your work life, your relationships or your spiritual life will not come by accident. Success comes as a result of the thousands of little habits you nurture, the countless little decisions you make on a daily basis.

Do you want an area of your life to be better in 2017? Focus on a few daily quality actions, and turn them into habits.

2. Enter the presence of God often.

You cannot spend time in God's presence and remain unchanged. Whatever part of your character or life needs growth, restoration or transformation, God's presence is where that happens.

Make entering the presence of God a habit. Do it often by yourself. Do it regularly with your spouse or family. Do it systematically with other believers.

Do you wonder how to do that? God has invited us to enter His presence boldly. It's a skill you can develop. Here are some helpful ways to do that. {eoa}

Dr. Carol Peters-Tanksley is both a board certified OB-GYN physician and an ordained doctor of ministry. As an author and speaker, she loves helping people discover the **Fully Alive** kind of life that Jesus came to bring us. Visit her website at .