

The Biblical Secret to Fighting Off Holiday Dread

Ready or not ... here come the holidays!

For some of us, the festive days that begin with the sweetness of Thanksgiving and come to a grand and raucous finale with New Year's Day truly are "the most wonderful time of the year." However, for others, these particular days in November and December are looked upon with woeful dread rather than with happy anticipation.

If you are struggling this year, trying to find a reason to engage yourself in all that smacks of the holiday season, let me just encourage you to focus on thanksgiving.

Now –be careful to note that I didn't say to focus on the calendar day of "Thanksgiving" but to fix your gaze on a lifestyle of the giving of thanks.

For the last three decades of my life, I have endeavored to be a voice of faith-filled joy in the lives of those who were depressed, discouraged or in an emotional malaise. So often, when my strongest and most genuine attempt at encouragement is rebuffed by those who, quite frankly, don't know if they can take another breath, I find myself repeating this sincere and appropriate phrase:

"If you don't understand joy and don't know where to get it ... just start by being thankful, because thanksgiving and joy are not so very far apart."

If, this year, as you face the holidays, you are not sure that you will be able to participate in the celebratory parade of cheer, let me just encourage you to enter sweetly and quietly, with a heart filled with thanksgiving.

During every day of these two months, make a daily list of all for which you are thankful. Do not lay your head upon the pillow at night until you have notated at least three things that you are grateful for that particular day.

Today, I am thankful for my health, for God's faithfulness, and that I will get to see some of my sweet grandchildren on Saturday.

What are the three things for which you are grateful today? Buy a "Thanksgiving journal" and write down eve at least three things every single day for the next 61 days that you recognize as precious blessings from the Lord.

I so appreciate the kindness of my husband, the wise voice of my mother and the joy of having a cup of coffee with my daughter.

What do you appreciate this month?

If you are not certain this year that there is any joy in your world, focus on entering His presence with thanksgiving and His courts with praise! It has been my experience that, as I remain in a continual state of gratitude, I hear the angels of Bethlehem and heaven singing over my life. And that, my friend, is something to celebrate! {eoa}

Carol McLeod is an author and popular speaker at women's conferences and retreats, where she teaches the Word of God with great joy and enthusiasm. Carol encourages and empowers women with passionate and practical biblical messages mixed with her own special brand of hope and humor. She has written 10 books, including *The Rooms of a Woman's Heart*; *Defiant Joy!*; *Holy Estrogen!*; *No More Ordinary*; *Refined*; *Joy For All Seasons*; *Let There Be Joy!*; *Pass the Joy, Please!*; *Guide Your Mind*, *Guard Your Heart*, *Grace Your Tongue*; and *Stormproof*, which releases on March 1, 2019. Her teaching DVD, *The Rooms of a Woman's Heart*, won the Telly Award, a prestigious industry award for excellence in religious programming. You

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