

10 Ways to Overcome a Sense of Christmas Loss

Christmas is a wonderful time of the year. As the song goes, *"It's the most wonderful time of the year."*

For some people, Christmas can be a miserable time.

Many have lost a loved one, suffered the end of a significant relationship, or even had a severe personal loss of income or health. For them, Christmas is simply another reminder of what they no longer have.

If we aren't careful, the joy of Christmas is covered over with the emotions of loss, and rather than appreciating what we have or looking forward to what's to come, we find ourselves in Christmas misery.

Several years ago, to prepare for a Christmas message, I consulted with two professional Christian counselors in our church – Jennifer Degler and Elizabeth Ellis. With their advice and some of my own, I'm offering some practical ways to overcome a sense of Christmas loss.

Ideally, Christ is the answer. Apart from Christ there is no Christmas and there is no peace. These suggestions are not designed to take the place of that truth, but rather to give some practical tips to help you deal with loss at Christmas.

Here are 10 ways to overcome a sense of Christmas loss:

1. List your losses. Death, divorce, injury, finances, children moved out this year—whatever they are—write them down. I've personally found journaling to be helpful. Admit the pain—write it down.

2. Share them. Certainly with God, but with a close friend, or with people who have experienced your loss. Don't be ashamed

to see a professional counselor. Find support in a Bible study group or prayer group. We were designed for community, especially for times like this.

3. Grieve the loss. Every loss must be grieved. The intensity of the grief may be determined by the intensity of the loss. Some form of depression is a normal response to grief. We've almost created a culture where we think suffering is abnormal. Don't be afraid to grieve—even publicly at times. It's OK to be human.

4. Resist falling into despair. That's where you live in a false reality that all hope is gone. It's not. By the way, you don't do that by ignoring them.

5. Take care of your physical body. Eat well, exercise, and get adequate rest. It's more important during a sense of loss.

6. Be aware of negative thinking. Catch the negative thoughts and replace them with thoughts that are positive and true. See Philippians 4:8.

7. Do something for someone else. There are many opportunities during the holidays to help people. Helping other people reminds us loss is universal and other people are struggling with you. Plus, something about giving fuels positive emotions.

8. Force yourself to participate in social activities. You won't feel like it, but social support is critical in recovering from loss. No one benefits by becoming a recluse. In fact, you actually increase the likelihood you will become clinically depressed if you isolate yourself.

9. Avoid the comparison game. Don't compare your losses to other people's losses. Significant loss naturally makes us focus inward, but that never works. And, it's dangerous.

10. Honor your losses with new traditions. Begin some new

family rituals that will help you reflect on the good things you experienced with the person you have lost or will help you remember happier days to come.

In my Christmas message, I shared one more suggestion—one I believe is the most powerful of all. It's this:

We have to learn to worship in tears. You have to learn to worship even in pain. When you realize God is good—even when it doesn't seem life is good—you are better equipped to face the storms of life, which are sure to come.

Obviously, Christ is the peace of Christmas, and He can fill your brokenness. You can trust Him. This Christmas, let the Christ of Christmas fill the void and loss you have in your heart and life.

You can find all my messages on my Vimeo page at [The message referenced is titled Obstacles to Christmas Joy: Loss.](#)

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