

Happy Holidays
Part I
by
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“Happy Holidays” is frequently heard this time of year. In our minds we see family gatherings, Christmas trees, tables of food, and we hear yuletide carols. However, holidays are not always happy. Here are some suggestions for making your holidays happy ones. The following concept is found in I Thessalonians 5:23 (“... I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”)

Deal with the physical

1. Exercise in moderation

Physical exercise releases endogenous opioids such as dynorphins that increase mood. Physical exercise releases epinephrine (adrenalin) and norepinephrine that are important biogenic amines that also increase mood. Physical exercise increases oxygen to the brain that increases mental health. The weather might be more inclement over the holidays so exercise in moderation at home.

2. Eat appropriately

Limit those sweets and fats. Eat more protein. Salads are healthy and will decrease your appetite over the holidays. Splenda (C₁₂ H₁₉ Cl₃ O₅) is similar to sugar (C₁₂ H₂₂ O₁₁) and can also decrease that sweet tooth over the holidays. One can enjoy food over the holidays without ignoring the caveat, “All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient...” (I Corinthians 6:12).

3. Rest plenty

A busy holiday may decrease sleep. More sleep might mean enjoying the holiday more and being more pleasant to be around.

Insomniacs have significant anxiety - 17 times more than those without insomnia; depression occurs 9 times more in those with insomnia.

I like the words in Proverbs 3:24 – (“...thy sleep shall be sweet.”)

Sleep suggestions include:

Review your favorite Bible verse just before bed.

Decrease light, noise, caffeine, and worry before bed.
Avoid late-night gift-wrapping and baking.

4. Consider medical help when depression is severe around the holidays.

The stress of the holidays can decrease the biogenic amines (serotonin, norepinephrine, and dopamine) that are important in the physiology of happiness; when the biogenic amines decrease, cortisol increases; when cortisol increases, BDNF (brain derived neurotrophic factor) that nourishes the brain cells decreases; when BDNF decreases, neurons decrease; when neurons become weak, the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex is flooded with worry, and the holidays are less enjoyable.

You are desperately needed in the battle for Christ. If you become severely depressed over the holidays seek physiological helps.

See the next issue for part II of Happy Holidays

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