

Happy Holidays

by

Frank Minirth, M.D., Ph.D.

Radio 12/08/09

Introduction

“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 ($C_{12}H_{19}Cl_3O_5$) is similar to sugar ($C_{12}H_{22}O_{11}$) 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.

Deal with the Emotional

1. Overcome loneliness

Many people experience lonely feelings during the holidays; therefore, seek supportive groups in your local church such as Celebrate Recovery. Seek to help others when you feel lonely around the holidays. Seek Christ – He would love to spend more time with you on His birthday.

2. Deal with past holiday memories

You may have over idealized the past. Memories are sometimes a composite of reality and wishes. In any event, Christ wants you to enjoy now. Talking with a friend or counselor might help if you are bothered by past memories.

3. Deal with “if only” thoughts

Reflect on Romans 8:28

Review Psalms 103:2

Work on letting go of unfulfilled expectations to God. Talk to God about your unfulfilled expectations.

4. Resolve relationship conflicts

Make peace. Consider making a friendly call this holiday to a family member that is no longer so friendly. Do not go into details; be Christ-like and just wish them a merry Christmas.

5. Forgive yourself for past wrongs and mistakes. First John 1:9 is still in the Bible – “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleans us from all unrighteousness.”
6. Take a therapeutic vacation:
 - Hospital – UBH Denton and El Paso, 1-888-789-HOPE (4673)
 - Retreat – Men and Women, www.minirthclinic.com

Deal with the Spiritual

1. Focus on Christ in the holidays. After all, the spiritual significance of the holidays is Christ. I really enjoy reminding myself of this basic principal.
2. Grow in Christ. Take walks with Christ. Talk with Christ. Memorize short Bible verses that move you close to Christ.
3. Avoid sin. You might enjoy memorizing I Corinthians 10:13.
4. Trust Christ as your personal savior. Perhaps you never accepted personally that Christ died on the cross in payment for your sin? If you have not, don't worry; just do it now with these simple words: “Father, I know I am a sinner. I believe Christ, your son, died on the cross in payment for my sins. I am accepting Christ now as my personal savior.” For more information read Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23, and John 1:12.
Now if you just trusted Christ, be assured of heaven in the future (I Peter 1:3-5), forgiveness now when you fail (I John 1:9), answered prayer (John 16:24), victory over temptation (I Corinthians 10:13), and comfort in trials (II Corinthians 1:3-4).

Happy Holidays

Conclusion

Resources

- Hope Line – for inpatient and partial hospitalization care in Denton and El Paso, Texas
1-888-789-HOPE (4673)
- For all radio program outlines go to:
www.mcphope.com
- Minirth Clinic – for outpatient care and individualized retreats
www.minirthclinic.com
972-669-1733 or 1-888-MINIRTH (646-4784)
- Celebrate Recovery – local Churches
www.celebraterecovery.com
- AACC – American Association of Christian Counselors
www.aacc.net
- www.2ndfiddleentertainment.com/maggiespassage
- Hearts of Love International Ministry (for pastors and Christian workers)
www.holinternational.org
- To obtain books written by Frank Minirth:
 - Books available only through the Minirth Clinic:
 - Psychopharmacology 2010, 600 pages
 - The Reflective Genius (obsessive compulsive disorder) 225 pages
 - Grace In Salvation (difficult to understand Bible passages on salvation) 250 pages
 - Other Minirth books available through
www.amazon.com

