

# The Myth of the Perfect Christmas



*'Tis the season to be jolly ...*





**Stores, radio, television, and social media scream, “CHRISTMAS IS COMING!” earlier every year.**



I'M WAY BEHIND SCHEDULE.  
THERE ARE BOXES TO SIT IN,  
WRAPPING PAPER TO LIE ON...  
I HAVEN'T EVEN KNOCKED  
DOWN THE TREE YET!

THE HOLIDAYS ARE  
SO STRESSFUL.



# Feeling A Bit Behind Schedule?



That sense of urgency, the notion time is slipping away and you had better get things done, can create feelings of anxiety, frustration, and overwhelm.

Trying to attain goals of perceived “perfection” sets us all up for failure.



# Do You Have Unrealistic Expectations?



Options shown

# Financial Pressure





# The Vicious Stress and Spending Cycle

The more stressed you feel, the more you spend. The more you spend, the bigger the bills get and the more stress you feel.



# The Stress Of The Perfect Dinner



# And Then There's The Stress Of Family!





What **No One** Wants

to **TALK ABOUT**

*at Christmas*



For many, Christmas is a time that:

- the loss of loved ones is more acute
- isolation feels suffocating
- financial woes are crippling
- and our pride stops us from reaching out or talking about our concerns.

Stress causes fatigue, depression, anxiety, lowered immunity to colds and flu, hormonal imbalances, immune disorders, Chronic Fatigue, Fibromyalgia, and IBS.

Stress is also linked to high blood pressure, strokes, acne, impaired memory and dementia as well as headaches and weight gain.



If you're concerned about yourself or someone else:

- Talk to someone about how you feel, a friend, family member or doctor
- Eat healthy food and limit sweets
- Do some form of exercise daily
- Reach out to people who you think may need help

# Focus On Gratitude

Thank God for His gift of nature.

Become more grateful for the quiet times.

Appreciate the people in your life who bring you joy.

# What Do You Need?

- The message around many holidays is give.
- Whether we're giving thanks, presents, or prayers, the focus is on others.
- It's important to take time throughout your day and tune into what you need.



- Often this is one of the most difficult tasks for people.
- Honoring what we need can feel selfish and uncomfortable.
- It can go against our values of putting others first.
- But if we ignore our own needs, it's hard to give fully to others.

- Imagine that each of us is in a garden with a sturdy fence surrounding it.
- What happens to your garden if you're always in other people's gardens, tending and caring for them?

Your garden becomes overgrown and choked with weeds, and all of the healthy plants are wilting or dying because they're not getting enough sun, water, and nutrients.







If we tend to what we need, and take care of our gardens first ...we're better able to help others with theirs because we're healthy enough and strong enough to do it.



So, when you're  
feeling like this,  
remember to ...



Cast all your anxiety on him, because he  
cares for you. (1 Peter 5:7)



**“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”**

**(Matthew 11: 28-30)**





Beautiful music is the art of the prophets that can calm the agitations of the soul; it is one of the most magnificent and delightful presents God has given us.

*Martin Luther*





In prisoners' chains with bleeding stripes  
Paul and Silas prayed that night  
And in their pain began to sing  
Their chains were loosed and they were free  
I bless Your name, I bless Your name  
I give You honor, give You praise  
You are the Life, the Truth, the Way  
I bless Your name, I bless Your name  
Some midnight hour if you should find  
You're in a prison in your mind  
Reach out and praise, defy those chains  
And they will fall in Jesus' name

# How Do *You* Relax From Holiday Stress?









The End