

Avoiding Holiday Stress

Understand what is motivating your choices, both for activities and gift purchases. Choose to live within your means. Instead of charging gifts on credit cards that could fuel January depression, use your creativity to make unique gifts—food, crafts, etc.

Neglect the tyranny of the urgent—learn to say no. Neglect self-pity, too: if you're feeling lonely, invite one or two people for a meaningful celebration at your home.

Stop *reacting* to cultural, family or other expectations and *respond* based on truth. Love family members with Christ's love instead of expecting them to meet your needs.

Take time to rest, rejoice, trust, talk—and breathe! Spend time outdoors, listen to Christmas music, go to a museum, or take an online tour of the world's best vacation spots.

Remember the reason for this season. Set traditions that matter for eternity.

Evaluate your emotional, physical, mental and spiritual responses to life's stressors. Maintain a balanced lifestyle, including time for rest—and healthy eating (as much as possible!).

Simplify your life; let go of useless baggage.

Set realistic boundaries for yourself and for those invited to your home.

Choose to Live a Balanced Life

Mentally—*Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.* Proverbs 3:5-6, NASU

Emotionally—*Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness^[a] be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.* Philippians 4:4-8, ESV

Spiritually—*Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.* Colossians 3:1-3, NIV

Physically—*And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.* Luke 2:52, ESV