

Post-Christmas Blues

As if to prepare themselves or prevent it from happening, a couple of people asked me if I have ever noticed a “let down” just after Christmas? One went so far as to say, “Isn’t it amazing; the happiest day of my year quickly becomes the saddest day of my year?”

Let me share my observations with you that may help us get through these days. The first few will be directed at the more juvenile reasons we feel “let down” just after Christmas.

I. You did not receive what you anticipated.

Perhaps some of us “hinted” quite heavily at our desired gifting, but they just didn’t take the hint. We must be careful to preserve the spirit of Christmas in this sense: Christmas is a time for giving. And did not our Lord say, *“I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive”* (Acts 20:35). Let this reason for a “let down” be a wake-up call to be more concerned for others. *“Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others”* (Philippians 2:4).

II. You did receive what you wanted but then realized it wasn’t that important.

For the younger readers, I say to you, welcome to reality. Many things in life are not as we anticipated. The reason for the disappointment with your gifts could be innumerable. To list a few: It did not fit in a complimentary fashion; it was not that fun after all; it did not perform in the manner it was supposed to; it was a rip-off.

Two great verses will teach us how to cope in those moments: *“And having food and raiment let us be therewith content”* (I Timothy 6:8). *“Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content”* (Philippians 4:11).

The reason we can be happy, even in the most disappointing times is because Christ is our source of joy, *“Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee”* (Hebrews 13:5). If we have Jesus, we have everything! Paul said, *“When Christ, who is our life...”* (Colossians 3:4). That one statement in the midst of great Bible doctrine sums it all up -- Christ is our life!

III. You find you must return to the routine.

You may have enjoyed the diversion at Christmas so much that you now look at the job that supports or supplements the income as mundane. Don’t feel too badly; it is a normal reaction. One remedy for this is to remember to enjoy the little breaks you get in the course of an average day. One old friend, now in heaven, called these “mini-vacations.” Years ago, when I was a professor in college, I enjoyed the longest break between my daily classes with some delightful fictional literature. I found myself in the midst of a promising mediocre day

looking forward to this little side-trip into fantasy. It wasn't lengthy -- just long enough to give my mental workings a breather.

IV. You are let down because of the reminder of loved one.

You are remembering a loved one now in heaven and the Christmases of yester-year flood your memory banks at this time of the year. You have lost a loved one through divorce or other unpleasant ways and the memories, good and bad, just seem to amplify and escalate during the season of Christmas and New Year's. Maybe you just said good-bye to a parent, a child or grandchild and the thought of not seeing them for a long time breaks your heart.

Just remember to take the good with you. "*...if there be any praise, think on these things*" (Philippians 4:8). Taking the good with you will make it less morbid when you see each other again. Years ago, I got off the plane in Sacramento, California and I was greeted by one of my best friends in college. His initial response was, "I am sad at seeing you!" Now, that will take the edge off a possibly good encounter. Then he continued, "That's right, I'm sad to see you, because I have been looking so forward to seeing you, now that you are here, you'll soon be gone." If I recall, I said, "Well, just enjoy me while I am here."

Let us take the good of every visit, build upon it, and on the next visit make some more good memories! After a while you will have built up a life-time of good memories and if one day the Lord calls one of us home, the other will have enough good times to remember until we see each other again in Heaven. Good reunions are like a microcosm of Heaven. The only difference is there will not be any goodbyes in Heaven.

I love you all. Happy New Year!

- Pastor Pope -