

1. Begin by praying that God will help you who He wants you to give to this year.
2. Pray that God will show you what to give and how much.
3. Ask God if He would have you to invite someone less fortunate than you for a meal.
4. Ask God to help you love to give instead of living to get.

Song: Teach Me Thy Way, O Lord - 337

Eliminate Post-Christmas Depression

24 December 2017 PM – Acts 20:35 – Christmas – Scott Childs

Introduction: What is your perspective on giving? Children are very candid in their speech. They usually say what they really think. If we were to ask a group of children what they like most about Christmas, many if not most of them would say “Getting gifts.” I suppose that is because our human nature is greedy and we like getting things.

Those same childhood feelings often remain in our hearts when we get older. I believe that greed is the main cause of depression at Christmas time each year. We so look forward to getting that if we don’t get all we wanted to get we experience a major let-down.

God has a simple solution to “Post-Christmas Depression” – love to give instead of living to get.

Transition: This evening I want us to examine 14 Bible facts about giving that, if applied, will surely **Eliminate Post-Christmas Depression**.

1. Give to God first, Pr 3:9-10

- a. God deserves to receive from us first. Our first-fruits are the first of our income.
- b. If we give to others but neglect God, we are dishonouring God and hurting our walk with Him.

2. Considering the poor is blessed of God, Ps 41:1

- a. “Considering” in this verse speaks of “looking upon; considering” the needs of those who are poor.
- b. Each Christmas we ought to seriously consider those around us who are poorer than we. We should look for a special poor family or person who we can help.

3. God promises to make the liberal soul fat, Pr 11:25

- a. The word “liberal” means to be a source of blessing. The word “fat” describes rich blessing.
- b. God promises that if we water another’s garden He will water our garden. In other words, God will bless our giving.

4. Showing pity on the poor is lending to God, Pr 19:17

- a. When we show favor or help those who are poor it is like lending to the Lord.
- b. God promises to repay what we give – likely in heaven. This

is not a get-rich promise.

5. Helping others is like helping Christ, Mt 25:34-40

- a. Giving to help others can be in many different forms – food, water, clothes, shelter, comfort, or a visit.
- b. When we show kindness toward other Christians it is like doing it to Christ.

6. God will use our "scoop" to bless us, Lu 6:38

- a. God urges us to be generous.
- b. God promises to bless us using the same scoop we used.

7. God wants you to invite those who cannot invite you in return, Lk 14:12-14

- a. Invite someone to share a meal with you.
- b. Consider inviting someone who is unable to return the favour. This will bring greater joy.

8. It is more blessed to give than receive, Ac 20:35

- a. While we don't find these exact words in the sayings of Christ, he often taught the principle.
- b. The instruction is two-fold, help the weak (needy or poor) and remember the happiness of giving.

9. We should follow Christ's giving example, 2 Co 8:9

- a. Christ was richer than our imagination can fathom. He owns all things. He eternally enjoyed the splendors of heaven. Yet he left all that to become a man for our sakes.
- b. He became poor that by doing so we could become rich. If Christ had never left heaven, we would never get to heaven. Helping someone else may be a sacrifice but you may make their Christmas much brighter.

10. What we sow we will reap, 2 Co 9:6

- a. The principle of sowing and reaping applies to good things as well as bad. We often think of sowing evil and reaping evil. However, when we sow good, we will also reap good.
- b. The context in which we find this verse is giving to help those in need. According to the scale that you give to others so will God return good to you. Our motive should not be "give to get" but we must remember this harvesting rule.

✧ *The world's stingiest man went Christmas shopping, but everything he saw was too expensive except a \$50 vase that*

was on sale for \$2 because the handle had been broken off. He bought it and had the salesman ship it by mail so that his friend would think he had paid \$50 for it and that it had been broken in shipment. A week after Christmas he received a thank you note from his friend. "Thank you for the lovely vase," his letter said. "It was so nice of you to wrap each piece separately."

11. God loves cheerful givers, 2 Co 9:7

- a. In the very same context as the verse above, God says NOT to give grudgingly or out of necessity. Motives do matter to God. This is true whether we are giving to God or giving to help one in need. Giving to help someone at Christmas time should be a matter of prayer – who, how, & how much. Then set it aside for that purpose.
- b. God loves it when we give cheerfully – from the heart.

12. God will supply for those who share, Php 4:19

- a. This promise that God will supply all our needs is not a general promise for everyone to claim. It is specifically for those who have given to the work of God. The Philippians had sent money to help Missionary Paul, thus they could claim God's promise to meet their needs.
- b. If we meet the criteria, God's supply is unlimited and can meet every need no matter how great it may be.

13. Earthly giving earns heavenly dividends, 1Ti 6:17-19

- a. We ought to be ready to distribute (i.e., give) and willing to communicate (i.e., share).
- b. When this is true, we are laying up treasures in heaven.

14. Sharing pleases God, He 13:16

- a. The word "communicate" as used in this verse does not mean conversation but "to share."
- b. God acknowledges that often to share will mean a sacrifice. We may have to do without something that we would like to meet the needs of another.
- c. Such sacrifices to help those in need truly please God.

Conclusion: If you apply God's facts about giving this Christmas it will Eliminate Post-Christmas Depression and it will bring joy to your heart. Where should you begin?