

Say “No” to Christmas TWWADI and “Yes” to Hope, Joy, and Peace

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In 2018 the American Psychological Association found that 38% of people say their stress increases during the holidays. *Lancet Planetary Health* will soon be publishing their finding that 75% of young people (ages 16-25) are frightened for their future. Instead of living in fear or dread, why not rediscover the *real* meaning of Christmas? Here’s what we’re celebrating: *To us, the greatest demonstration of God’s love for us has been his sending his only Son into the world to give us life through him. We see real love, not in that fact that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to make personal atonement for our sins* (1 John 4:9-10, Phillips).

Rather than rushing to do “everything,” just say “no” to **TWWADI**: *The Way We’ve Always Done It*. At any stage of life, we can say “yes” to learning something new! Making consistent choices to move away from TWWADI’s distorted “should” thinking, we can move toward God, allowing Him to lovingly guide our celebration: *If any of you lacks wisdom [to guide him through a decision or circumstance], he is to ask of [our benevolent] God, who gives to everyone generously and without rebuke or blame, and it will be given to him* (James 1:5, AMP). **We can celebrate Christmas, living as one with the One** who gave His life so we can live through Him.

One Hope: Jesus (1 Peter 1:3) — *One Joy:* Jesus (John 15:11) *One Peace:* Jesus (2 Thess. 3:16)

- 🌈 **HOPE in God**, allowing Him to renew your thinking—and your Christmas season! Say “**NO**” to overspending or doing more than your body can handle, making healthy choices instead of being dominated by stress, anxiety, or depression [and finding help if indicated]. It’s time to say “no”: a) if you’re snapping at those you love instead of enjoying them, b) if you feel rushed and stressed rather than appreciating the moment, or c) if you’re worried about January’s credit card bill. Say “yes” to resting and rejoicing in the Lord.
- 🌈 **Notice JOY** through the eyes of a child. Jesus said, *I assure you and most solemnly say to you, unless you repent [that is, change your inner self—your old way of thinking, live changed lives] and **become like children [trusting, humble, and forgiving], you will never enter the kingdom of heaven*** (Matthew 18:3, AMP). **Being** trusting, humble, and forgiving **can transform Christmas!**
- 🌈 **Allow God to provide PEACE** amidst your challenges and concerns: *Now may **the God of peace** who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen* (Hebrews 13:20, ESV).

This Christmas let’s pause to immerse ourselves in God’s lavish gift of **love**: *In this is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation (the atoning sacrifice) for our sins* (1 John 4:10, AMP). Jesus shows us how to counteract human tendencies and experience authentic peace—instead of holding grudges and being self-centered or living in hurt and disappointment, we are called to move from fear to love: *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another* (John 13:34-35, NASB).

Merry Christmas, in His unfailing LOVE



For practical ways to experience hope, joy, and peace, you can work through *Core Healing from Trauma*, a biblical counseling workbook for individuals or groups, available on Amazon (<https://cutt.ly/occdeljH>), and now available as an audiobook on audible. You can subscribe to my blog at <https://corehealingfromtrauma.com/>.