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HELPFUL HINTS

— *for* —



**HOLIDAY**

**STRUGGLES**

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# KEEP THE PEACE: CREATING HARMONIOUS FAMILY HOLIDAYS

*The holidays are a wonderful time of year to get together with loved ones both near and far and celebrate the season.* Sometimes, however, the beautiful uniqueness that makes each family special can lead to challenges. Differing values, politics and other dynamics can create tension at an otherwise fun gathering. We've gathered resources and tools to help you navigate these types of conflicts with love, grace and the spirit of the season.



## LISTEN NOW

**FAMILY DYNAMICS DURING THE HOLIDAYS**  
LISTEN FOR FREE THROUGH 1/31/15!

Looking for ways to make the holidays meaningful to you and your family? Through humorous stories and practical advice, Dr. Greg Smalley and his wife, Erin, will help you to establish special traditions and quality family time—as well as reduce tensions and drama that can sometimes rise during the holiday season.



## READ NOW

**CHRISTMAS AND THE IN-LAWS**

The joining of two families can come with unique challenges. Different values systems and traditions come together when two people decide to marry—which can occasionally create tension. This article from *Thriving Family*® magazine will help you handle tricky family dynamics with grace, love and a heart for a united family.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### READ

***Strained In-law Relationships and Family Gatherings***

***When a Loved One Says "I'm Gay"***

### WATCH AND LISTEN

***Someone I Love is Gay***

***Taking the Stress Out of the Holidays***



## Q&A

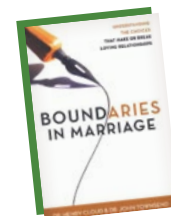
**QUESTION:** Do you have any advice for dealing with extended family members who don't get along? My in-laws always like to host big get-togethers with all the relatives, but they're always marked by tension and dissension. Can you suggest a solution?

**ANSWER:** *One option is to be honest. Next time you get an invitation, tell your in-laws that you appreciate their thoughtfulness. Then explain that you simply aren't going to be able to join the party.*

### READ MORE

*and tackle other tricky issues.*

The Family Help Center Answers Your Questions



## FEATURED RESOURCE

### **BOUNDARIES IN MARRIAGE**

Drs. Cloud and Townsend help show how respecting a spouse's personal "territory" actually strengthens a relationship, as well as how to safeguard marriage from intruders such as idols, affairs and well-meaning parents. When you give a gift of any amount, you will receive this valuable book for **free!**



# THE FIRST CHRISTMAS: PARENTING THROUGH SEPARATION AND DIVORCE

*The first Christmas as a separated or newly divorced family can be difficult for parents and children.* However, there is hope for those who are struggling—we can help you to work together and find peace in trying times. We’ve provided practical advice and inspiration to come alongside you on this journey.



## LISTEN NOW

**CO-PARENTING: HELPING YOUR CHILD THRIVE AFTER DIVORCE (PART 1 & PART 2)** LISTEN FOR FREE THROUGH 1/31/15!

Ron Deal and Tammy Daughtry bring solid advice and insights into the world of the divorced parent who wants to cooperate as much as possible with their former spouse to help their children grow up in a healthy, loving environment. Tammy relates her story of growing up as a child of divorce and going through an unwanted divorce herself, utilizing that pain to help other divorced parents realize the value of co-parenting with the child's best interest in mind. Both Deal and Daughtry offer practical help on how to navigate the challenges and make the best of this difficult situation.



## READ NOW

**RECLAIMING CHRISTMAS JOY**

Christmas can feel overwhelming when you're newly divorced and dealing with so many changes. This article from *Thriving Family*® shares the personal story of a newly single mom and her journey to find joy, hope and new traditions amidst the transition of divorce.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

READ

**Successful Single Parenting During the Holidays**

WATCH

**Single Parent Christmas**



## Q&A

**QUESTION:** How do I face the holidays after my divorce?

**ANSWER:** *A first step is to be honest about your emotional pain and give yourself permission to grieve. After all, losing a mate to divorce can be compared to losing one to death.*



## READ MORE

*and tackle other tricky issues.*

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## FEATURED RESOURCE

### WHEN HAPPILY EVER AFTER SHATTERS

Sue Birdseye offers this hope-filled practical guide to help you honor God through a broken marriage, overcome abandonment, raise children as a single parent, please God as a single person and truly forgive those who have wronged you.

# SINGLE AT CHRISTMAS: NAVIGATING THE SEASON WITH GRACE



*There are unique challenges that come with being alone during the holiday season.* Overly concerned relatives, the occasional bouts of loneliness and the worries about how to manage—all of these can be a little overwhelming. Luckily, the Boundless® team has compiled advice and tips to help you manage.



## LISTEN NOW

### CHRISTMAS WISHES: EPISODE 307

This inspiring Boundless podcast tackles the many questions that come with celebrating Christmas as a grown-up, the meaning of the season, parents, goals and more. Join your favorite Boundless hosts for an hour of practical advice and uplifting discussion just for singles.



## READ NOW

### ALONE FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Suzanne Hadley Gosselin shares her story of singlehood through the Christmas season, including how she coped with loneliness, family and finding peace with God's plan for her life.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### LISTEN

***'Twas the Fight Before Christmas: Episode 151***

***Military Marriages: Episode 305***

### READ

***Making it a Merry Christmas***

***Adding Meaning to the Holidays***

***Unmerry Christmas***



## Q&A

**QUESTION:** Being single can be really hard at Christmas—especially when I go home to be with my family. Can you give any advice for making this a happy holiday season?

**ANSWER:** *If you're feeling apprehensive about being lonely during the holidays, plan ahead one or two things you know will bring you some Christmas joy, such as a family outing or an afternoon baking cookies and wrapping presents.*

### READ MORE

*and tackle other tricky issues.*

The Family Help Center Answers Your Questions



## FEATURED RESOURCE

### ANSWERING QUESTIONS SINGLE ADULTS ASK (DAILY BROADCAST)

Lisa Anderson, the director of Boundless at Focus on the Family, offers hope, encouragement and advice for singles, particularly those who are 30 and older.

# NOT SO MERRY: COPING WITH HOLIDAY BLUES

*Have you felt a little lost in a season that is supposed to be filled with joy?* You're not the only one. Many people experience periods of depression, loneliness or just a general sadness during the holidays. It's important for you to know that you do not have to cope with these feelings alone. We have resources to encourage you and help you stand strong as you face these challenges.



## READ NOW DEPRESSION

Sometimes, it can be hard to understand why we, or our loved ones, might behave the way that we do. This informative article series, written by professor of psychology Dr. Archibald D. Hart, covers a variety of topics on depression to offer encouragement and clarity to those coping with the challenge.

### OVERCOMING HOLIDAY LONELINESS

Suzanne Hadley Gosselin shares her personal experience with loneliness and offers warm prayers and inspiration to others in this heartfelt article.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

READ

***Dance with Jesus Into Christmas***

***Post-Holiday Loneliness When You're Single***



## Q&A

**QUESTION:** Christmas is supposed to be a joyous time, but I struggle from depression. What can I do?

**ANSWER:** *The Focus on the Family Help Center counselors are here to listen and pray with you, as well as provide guidance and resources to help you and your family thrive.*

**PLEASE CONTACT US.**

**READ MORE**  
and tackle other tricky issues.

The Family Help Center Answers Your Questions



## FEATURED RESOURCE

### SHINING A LIGHT ON DEPRESSION (DAILY BROADCAST)

Drs. Gary Lovejoy and Greg Knopf, co-authors of *Light on the Fringe: Finding Hope in the Darkness of Depression*, discuss the symptoms, factors and available treatments of depression.

# IN LOVING MEMORY: HEALING FROM LOSS AT CHRISTMAS

*The first year that we must cope with the loss of a loved one can be incredibly difficult—and the holidays often can make their absence feel that much stronger.* The following resources offer suggestions and insight into healing your family and feeling joy at Christmas through honoring the ones you have lost.



## LISTEN NOW

**TAKING THE STRESS OUT OF THE HOLIDAYS (PART 1 & PART 2)**  
*LISTEN FOR FREE THROUGH 1/31/15!*

Mary Hunt, Kathi Lipp and Phil Vischer discuss practical ways to de-stress during the Christmas season and focus on the things that really matter.



## READ NOW

**COPING WITH DEATH AND GRIEF**

This article series explores the grieving process and tough topics such as depression and anxiety after a death in the family. Each article provides tips and advice for coping with the loss of a loved one.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

READ

***Healthy Grief***

***When Your Family Has Lost a Loved One: Finding Hope Together***



## Q&A

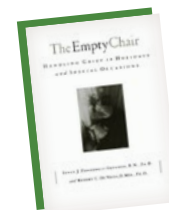
**QUESTION:** Is it possible to become “stuck” in grief?

**ANSWER:** *After a loved one dies, those who grieve may find it difficult to function in everyday situations. Lingering emotional turmoil, a sense of shock and social withdrawal are painful but natural reactions that can linger.*

**READ MORE**

*and tackle other tricky issues.*

The Family Help Center Answers Your Questions



## FEATURED RESOURCE

***THE EMPTY CHAIR: HANDLING GRIEF ON THE HOLIDAYS AND SPECIAL OCCASIONS***

The holidays are a great family time, but also a very poignant reminder if a family member has passed away during the year. Move toward healing this Christmas with suggestions and traditions that honor your loved one and also bring joy back into the season.

# CHRISTMAS ON A BUDGET: MANAGING MONEY DURING THE HOLIDAYS

*It's tempting to go overboard over the holidays—gifts, events and more can put a bit of strain on your family finances.* We want to help you have a meaningful Christmas that won't put you in debt, so we've compiled our best articles and resources to guide you through the season without putting a huge dent in your bank account.



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**TAKING THE STRESS OUT OF THE HOLIDAYS (PART 1 & PART 2)**  
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## READ NOW

**YOUR CHRISTMAS MONEY PLAN**

Stay on budget—and on the same financial page as your spouse—with this informative article on managing money and expectations during the holiday season. You'll find great tips for creating a plan, as well as ideas on being a thoughtful gift-giver.

## CELEBRATING THE HOLIDAYS

Want to have a memorable Christmas without spending all of your savings? This article series will help you set a realistic budget and offers practical ideas for creating wallet-friendly gifts that are meaningful and fun.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

**Financial Help Post Holidays**

**Online Envelope Budgeting App**

**Personal Debt Analysis**



## Q&A

**QUESTION:** How can we enjoy Christmas when we have to spend so much money on presents? We're stressed over our finances all year, but it gets worse during the holidays.

**ANSWER:** *Christmas can be a family's most memorable time of the year—but those memories can be either good or bad! Decisions we make in preparation for Christmas have an impact that extends far beyond Christmas Day itself. Here are some recommendations to make your next Christmas better, more enjoyable and less financially stressful than the last.*

## READ MORE

*and tackle other tricky issues.*

The Family Help Center Answers Your Questions



## FEATURED RESOURCE

**CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS  
WITHOUT GOING INTO DEBT**  
*(DAILY BROADCAST)*

Financial expert Mary Hunt preps parents on how to confidently budget for the gift-giving season while emphasizing that the traditions and memories made are the most important presents for children.



# REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS: MANAGING HOLIDAY STRESS

*It's the busiest time of the year for families!* But you can stop putting stress on yourself and enjoy the family time, love and hope of the season. We've got great ideas and tools for managing expectations and stress, so you can stay connected and loving with your spouse and your children.



## READ NOW

### **MAKING MEANINGFUL CHRISTMAS MEMORIES**

Christmas is an incredible opportunity for you to not only share the message and love of Jesus Christ, but to build memories with your children that will last a lifetime. Discover great ways to create a memorable, meaningful holiday with your family.

### **PEACE ON EARTH... AND GOODWILL TOWARD YOUR MAN**

How do we maintain a strong connection with our spouse during the Christmas hullabaloo? Erin Smalley offers great tips and insight into managing expectations and keeping your relationship happy and thriving.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

READ

***Filling the Holiday Hollow***

***The Stress of Jangling Bells***



## Q&A

**QUESTION:** I always want to have a relaxed and joyful Christmas each year, but somewhere along the way, I find myself completely overwhelmed. Any tips for making it different this year?

**ANSWER:** *With the arrival of the holidays, many of us experience an odd mixture of excitement and dread as we prepare to celebrate the season. I have found that the best way to lessen the stress of the holidays is to be prepared.*

### **READ MORE**

*and tackle other tricky issues.*

The Family Help Center Answers Your Questions



## FEATURED RESOURCE

### **REDEEMING THE SEASON: SIMPLE IDEAS FOR A MEMORABLE AND MEANINGFUL CHRISTMAS**

Co-authored by two mothers who were searching to bring more meaning to their own family celebrations, this book offers ideas that are sane, simple and original. At times both hilarious and heartwarming, the authors' own family stories plus easy-to-use ideas inspire readers to examine their own traditions and consider ways to make Christmas both memorable and meaningful.

LOOKING FOR SUPPORT & ENCOURAGEMENT?  
**WE ARE HERE TO SERVE YOU.**



## *The Family Help Center*

The holidays can be a difficult time for families. Issues such as loneliness, depression and family conflict can leave us feeling lost or discouraged.

*But you are not alone—we are here to be your hope and support.*

We have specialists here to help you overcome whatever challenges you may be facing. Whether you need loving prayer, practical advice or a referral to a free session with one of our licensed Christian counselors, we can guide you through it—together.

### **THE FAMILY HELP CENTER**

If you or someone you love is in need of support, call 800-A-FAMILY (232-6459), Monday through Friday, 6:00AM to 8:00PM MST to speak with a Family Help Specialist.