

**HOPE for the HOLIDAYS – Isaiah 9:6**

*“For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace” – Isaiah 9:6*

**I. What can we learn from the National Institute of Mental Health’s statistics on depression (2017)?**

1. An estimated 17.3 million adults in the U.S. had at least one major depressive episode. 7.1% of all U.S. adults.
2. The prevalence of major depressive episode was higher among adult females (8.7%) compared to males (5.3%).
3. The prevalence of adults with a major depressive episode was highest among individuals aged 18-25 (13.1%).

**II. What are some reasons people “lose their peace” during the holidays?**

1. Grief over a deceased loved one.
2. Fear about COVID-19.
3. Weight of shopping.
4. Hassle of cooking.
5. Stress of cleaning.
6. Strain of entertaining guests.
7. Uneasiness about traveling.
8. Pressure of completing old & new tasks.
9. Concern over limited finances.
10. Anxiety about the future.

**III. What are some ways to “maintain your peace” during the holidays?**

1. Pray and ask God to give you peace in every area of your life.
2. Write down 5 things God did to bless you in 2020.
3. Contact a friend or counselor to discuss unresolved feelings.
4. Reach out to 5 people to let them know that you appreciate them.
5. Write down 5 positive memories about a deceased loved on.
6. Forgive people who have wronged or harmed you.
7. Memorize a Bible verse and repeat it aloud throughout the holidays.
8. Exercise and stay active.
9. Treat yourself to a gift and do something fun.
10. Celebrate the birth of Christ.

**IV. What should we know about Godly peace?**

1. The Hebrew word for “peace” is *shalom* and means harmony, serenity, unity, calmness, and tranquility.
2. A peaceful life does not mean an easy, simple, uncomplicated, or painless life.
3. Jesus does not promise us an easy life but does promise to help us thrive in life.
4. Jesus told us to expect tribulation, turbulence, trouble, and trials.
5. Be assured that God’s peace is not dependent on our own strength or circumstances.
6. We must seek and endeavor to have peace internally, spiritually, emotionally, physically, and mentally.

**V. What does the Bible say about Godly peace?**

1. These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. -*John 16:33*
2. “The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.” -*Numbers 6:24-26*
3. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. -*John 14:27*
4. The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.” -*Numbers 6:24-26*
5. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. -*Matthew 5:9*
6. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. -*Colossians 3:15*
7. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. -*Romans 12:18*
8. The LORD gives strength to his people; the LORD blesses his people with peace. -*Psalms 29:11*