

Walking Through the Holidays after Separation and Divorce

Instead of looking forward to the holiday season this year, you may instead be feeling a myriad of emotions and stresses as you wonder how you will make it through. Asking yourself the following questions can help you to identify and face the specific feelings and concerns you have about the coming holiday.

1. How am I going to make it through the holiday season?
2. If this is the first Christmas I will be spending without my former spouse, how do I feel right now? If it is the second or more, how am I planning to spend the holidays this year?
3. What are my plans for Christmas Eve and Day?
4. If I could do anything I want, what would I do on the above days?
5. Do I find myself trying to please my family or friends and continuing with Christmas decorating and activities as in previous years?
6. Do I find myself dreading the places where people are happy and enjoying the season, such as stores, office parties and church services? Do I feel guilty if I don't want to participate in these activities? How do I feel about attending church during the holidays?
7. What am I doing for myself at this time? Am I getting enough rest? Am I able to sleep at night? Am I eating enough to be able to work? Am I exercising in any way, such as walking? Do I feel selfish because I want to be alone sometimes? Do I feel guilty if I don't want to do what my friends or family want me to do?
8. Am I wondering how long this hurting will last? Do I have a trusted friend who will listen to me and not give advice, but just love me?

If you are in separation or divorce, remember you are not alone. God promises that He will be by your side; He will never leave you; He's always faithful, and He loves you dearly. Deuteronomy 31:8 says, "The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged."

We encourage you to attend a DivorceCare divorce recovery support group, where you will have the opportunity to connect with and meet others who are feeling similar emotions and fears as you. It is important for everyone to have a "safe" place to go where people understand what you are feeling and where you can learn to walk forward in healing and wholeness.

One of the greatest gifts you can give yourself this Christmas is to take care of your physical and emotional needs. This can be a turning point in your healing process when you join others in a support group during the holidays.

To find a DivorceCare group near you, visit www.divorcecare.org or call 800-489-7778