



- ◆ Carbon Monoxide (CO) is odorless and deadly. If you or family members feel better when you leave and worse when you come home (flu-like symptoms) suspect carbon monoxide poisoning. Go outside immediately and seek medical help.
- ◆ Rules for Leftovers: 2 hours~2 inches~4 days: 2 Hrs from oven to refrigerator; Store food 2 inches thick to speed chilling; 4 days in the refrigerator or freeze instead. Exception: Use stuffing and gravy within 2 days or throw it out.

### Life is difficult...

Accept it and move on? God helps those who help themselves? Think positive?

Depression is not a spiritual weakness or a character flaw.

Depression causes persistent negative thought patterns.

Get busy helping others; your mood & attitude are sure to improve?

Depression is the leading cause of disability in the US.

10% of the population suffers from depression every year.

Everything happens for a reason; there must be a lesson you have failed to learn.

Depression is a physical illness caused by a chemical imbalance.

Depression damages self-esteem and affects every aspect of life.

Pray harder, or better, or more often?

Depression tends to be an inherited trait, common among families.

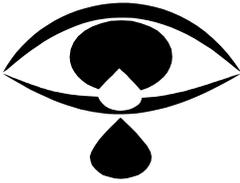
Depression often goes undetected and 2/3 of those afflicted don't seek help.

Why don't those who are depressed seek the help they need? The answer is found in our lack of or usual response to one who is depressed.

(Maybe you are at this very moment wondering why we have to talk about depression at Christmastime, which is supposed to be joyful.)

Depression is magnified during the holidays for those who have it.

Shortened daylight hours during winter can cause a type of depression.



### Good Intentions

When is doing nothing better than doing some thing? Responding to a depressed person in the above mentioned ways can cause them to increase their social isolation and judge themselves even more harshly.

Suicide is considered the only means to the end of their intolerable suffering.

Remember: Depression causes impaired thinking and reasoning.

### What Can We Do?

Celebrate & Thank God every day if depression has not affected you.

Recognize depression as an illness, not a self-induced state of mind.

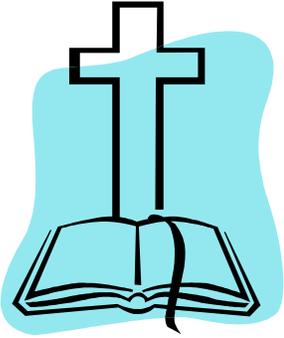
Really Look & Listen

Pray with them and provide simple ways to brighten another's day:

- Attempt to make eye contact & speak. Brief but meaningful eye contact & a word of kindness often communicates respect and worth to others.
- Show respect & demonstrate Christian patience. Avoidance is common if a depressed person is not visibly improved by our interventions.
- Listen & convey no shame or blame. Offer to accompany a person to consult a doctor or counselor. Suggest that medications often correct chemical imbalance. Be kind to every person you meet.



Matthew 7: 12



“So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.”

Carve out some quiet time this week to read the Christmas Story in 6 parts. Select a translation different from the Bible you're most used to reading. Read slowly & carefully, stopping to picture the scenes described: sights, sounds, smells. Imagine yourself in the place of 1 of the characters in each scene, and write down your thoughts & feelings as you observe the miraculous events unfold. Dig deep, then deeper still.

Day 1: Luke 1: 26-80 (Mary's Story.)

Day 2: Matthew 1: 18-25 (Joseph's Story)

Day 3: Luke 2: 1-7 (Joseph & Mary's travel to Bethlehem)

Day 4: Luke 2: 8-20 (Shepherds' Story)

Day 5: Luke 2: 21-38 (Simeon & Anna's Story)

Day 6: Matthew 2: 1-23 (Magi's Story)

Day 7: Read the whole story again in a single setting.



**Suggestion:** On Day 4, walk outside at night right before you go to bed. Looking up at the dark sky, imagine what it would feel like to see it suddenly lit up with the presence of hundreds or even thousands of otherworldly beings praising God. Spend time in prayer, worshipping the Lord and asking Him to reveal more of His true glory to you.

## Jesus is the reason for the Season

**Movie** *The Nativity Story* is a character-based drama, rather than an event-based drama. It is a story about individuals who made decisions based on very real motives & emotions-- love, faith, doubt, fear. Historically researched, the movie draws parallels to present-day issues we deal with on a daily basis. Producers hope that friends and families will take a break from the commercialism of the Season, and watch a story about family, strength and determination on the other side of doubt & fear. Let us not allow the pace, demands, deadlines and materialism overshadow the true message of Christmas. Check the newspaper for show times.

It is good to recall that the birth of Jesus was the most personal message possible from God. An angel told Joseph that this miracle baby would be a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. “Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which is translated, “God is with us” (Matthew 1:23). God Himself came to earth in the person of Jesus Christ to save us from our sins. Could anything be more personal than that?

**Prayer:** Lord, protect us from those things that distract us from You. Clear the eyes of our hearts so they can focus on the splendor of all Your Creation. Thank you for loving & blessing us as we are. Amen.