



**MARY SOUTHERLAND**  
*The Stress-Buster and Women's Ministry Motivator*



## **Holiday Survival Guide**

Four Bible lessons  
To help you get the most out of the holidays.

Holiday Stress Busters  
Don't Let The Grinch Steal Your Christmas  
How To Beat The Holiday Blues  
Don't Miss Christmas

by  
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## Study Guide

### Holiday Shopping Guide By Mary Southerland

**Thank you** for purchasing the bible study, *Holiday Survival Guide*. My prayer is that God will use this study to help you maneuver the treacherous waters of dealing with family and friends during the holidays. The study itself, for the most part, is self-explanatory but let me share some extra thoughts and ideas with you.

The study has several different sections that can be completed in one day or in one week. My hope is that this format will set the learner up for success instead of failure. So often, we begin a bible study with excitement and determination. Then life happens and we miss a day. The enemy immediately dumps a load of guilt on us as he whispers, "You might as well give up. You will never do this!" Using the format of *Holiday Survival Kit* eliminates that scenario. If you miss a day, it can easily be done later in the week. The goal is to underline the relevance and power of God's Word and to learn how to "plug" it into every minute of every day. First, let's look at each section of the bible study.

**Mindset for the Journey:** The greatest spiritual battles are first waged in the mind, a principle that is especially true when dealing with powerful emotions such as fear. Having the right mental attitude or mindset as you begin the study is vital to its success in your life. Before you open your bible, stop, pray and thank God for His written Word. Ask Him to reveal the unique message He has for you in this study. Read the key passage listed two or three times. Make a deliberate choice to *fix* your thoughts on each word and each phrase as you read it. Don't let your mind wander to the pile of dirty laundry or the mystery of tonight's dinner menu. Focus only on God's truth and let everything else fall away. Your mind is now set and you are ready to begin Day 1.

**Facts for the Journey:** This section is the framework and heart of each week's study. To grow spiritually, we must walk by faith – not by sight. Faith comes from God through his Word, which is fact. If you were to look up the word "fact" in the dictionary, you would see that it is defined as *information or truth*. We need to base our life on the truths we read in the bible. We need to embrace each word as information straight from God. In Hebrews 4:12, we are told that the word of God is *living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing the soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart*. My prayer is that as you work through each lesson, the power of Scripture comes alive in your life and empowers you for your journey.

**Prayer for the Journey:** Prayer should be as natural as breathing. Powerful prayer is not determined by a position or posture and there is no secret formula for prayer. Prayer is simply a two-way conversation between you and God. When we pray, our mind and heart should be directed constantly toward Him. The words we say when we pray aren't nearly as important as the attitude of our heart, the life behind the prayer and the honesty of the conversation. Each lesson contains a section on prayer that serves as a guide to a more powerful prayer life.

**Truth for the Journey:** We need to become “one-truth” believers. By that, I mean every time we hear the Word of God, we should come away with one new truth that we can apply in our life. Many times, I have been listening to a message when, suddenly, it is like God taps me on the shoulder and says, “That one is for you!” In this section, you will have the opportunity to pinpoint the one truth from the study that impacted you most.

**Steps for the Journey:** We can easily fall into the trap of thinking that it is enough to study and know the bible. God is much more interested in how much of the bible we *do* than how much we *know*. We need to hear, listen to, and apply God’s word. James 1:22 says, *But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves*. This section will help you make a specific plan for putting feet to or applying the biblical truths that you learn.

**Reflections on the Journey:** We are busy people, aren’t we? It is so easy to rush through a time of prayer or bible study in order to get to the next task on our list. This section of the study will help you take the time to reflect on God’s truth. You will learn how to examine, evaluate and record thoughts, truths, and life changes. Over time, these reflections will help you keep your glance on the circumstances and your gaze on God.

**Power for the Journey:** Our greatest source of power is God's Word--but only if we saturate our lives with it. Psalm 119:105 says that the word of God is *a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path*. In other words, God’s word brings light into the dark places. Through scripture, we will find direction for tomorrow and discover God’s plan for life. This section will help you make a plan to memorize verses and passages of scripture. You may need to start by memorizing only one verse per week. That’s fine! Just start! God will honor your obedience.

### Resources

You will find many helpful tools that will make bible study easier for you. I frequently use a couple of web sites as I study: [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com) and [www.crosswalk.com](http://www.crosswalk.com). I would love to be a resource for you. If I can pray with you or help you during the course of this study, I would love to do so! Simply email me at: [journeyfriend@cs.com](mailto:journeyfriend@cs.com).

I would also love to hear from you as God gives you new truth, answers your prayer, meets a need in your life or gives you the opportunity to share your story. In other words, I want to walk with you on your journey. Together, we will find new Light.

And may this holiday season .... be the best holiday season of your life!

Blessings!  
Mary

**Holiday Survival Guide:**

# Holiday Stress-Busters



# Day 1: Facts For The Journey

Christmas is my favorite time of the year. I enjoy everything about the Christmas holidays - well, almost everything. I could do without the holiday stress. Instead of experiencing a joy-filled Christmas that truly celebrates the birth of Christ, we are often left with very little joy and a whole lot of stress during the holiday season. In fact, some people experience only emptiness during the Christmas season. It is not supposed to be that way. The very word, "Christmas," literally means "Christ's mass" and should be a time of celebration. The problem is that we tend to celebrate the wrong things and that is where the stress begins. In this week's lesson you will find a list of ways to eliminate holiday stress, but the reality is that until we know Him we can never fully understand or celebrate His birth. How can we have a joy-filled Christmas and manage holiday stress at the same time? I believe the answer is found in giving. Maybe we are giving the wrong gifts or maybe we are giving gifts to the wrong people or the problem may be that we are not receiving the right gifts.

## 1. We must receive God's gift to us.

Luke 2:8-12 "There were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.'"

God gave the greatest gift of all when He gave Jesus. The very heart of Christmas can be found in a very familiar verse of Scripture that we rarely associate with Christmas.

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son."

Christmas is not a date on the calendar. It is a way of life. Like the innkeeper who turned Mary and Joseph away, we have put up a sign in our heart and life that reads, "No room." We can participate in the festivities of the Christmas season but until we receive the gift of Jesus we will never truly experience Christmas. To have a joy-filled Christmas, we must keep Jesus in the center of our life and at the heart of every minute of every day. Jesus could have been born in a palace and His first home on earth could have been a mansion but He came to a manger and His birth was announced by shepherds instead of Kings. Think about it. The greatest of all miracles in the midst of total simplicity. Today, He waits to come to us in the midst of our simple and ordinary circumstances of daily life.

It was Christmas Eve and the family was preparing to attend the church service. Everyone was going, everyone except Dad. He was an honest man, a good man, but he simply could neither understand nor accept the story of the baby in a manger. It was just too far-fetched for the human mind to conceive. How could God allow His Son to give up Heaven for Earth? Why would Jesus want to die for any man? The questions lingered and, not wanting to be a hypocrite, the man chose to stay home rather than sit in a pew with an unbelieving heart.

As his family went out into the cold wintry night, the man added a log to the fire and settled into his favorite chair to read the paper and wait for his family's return. A knock at the window pulled him away from his peaceful reverie and glancing outside, he was stunned to see that the knocking sound was actually a small bird desperately trying to reach the warmth of the fire.

The man thought for a moment, contemplating a solution to the bird's predicament. He opened the window but the bird wouldn't come in. He tried opening the front door, but the bird refused his offer. Finally, the man grabbed his coat and stepped into the Christmas night and God's plan. He trudged through the deepening snow, determined to save the tiny bird by opening the barn doors, convincing the little bird that the barn was safe and warm. Still, the bird refused his solution.

Frustrated, the man thought, "If only I could be a bird, for just a moment, I could lead the bird to safety." Suddenly, the sound of church bells rang through the cold, dark night - and he knew. He finally understood the reason Jesus came - to be one of us - to lead us into the safety of His will.

## Day 5: Power For The Journey

One of the most powerful truths about the birth of Jesus is the fact that He chose to leave heaven and come to earth as man. I encourage you to memorize Hebrews 2:17-18 and contemplate what that means for your life. Record your thoughts in your journal.

Hebrews 2:17-18 "And it was necessary for Jesus to be like us so that He could be our merciful and faithful High Priest before God. For since He Himself has now been through suffering and temptation, He knows what it is like when we suffer and are tempted, and He is wonderfully able to help us."