



Episode 10 – Managing Stress During the Holidays

Welcome to the Relational Impact’s podcast. We are here to help you grow in your relationship with the Lord and in your relationship with others.

Tim: Hello, everybody! Welcome to the Relational Impact podcast. Elaine and I are beginning to plan for the upcoming holidays, and I’m sure many of you are doing the same thing. Well, except for you “last minute” folks...you kind of wait until the last minute, right? Today, we want to discuss some ways we can avoid unnecessary anxiety during the holidays. Know what I mean, Elaine?

Elaine: Yes! I think it’s funny that you said “except for your last minutes folks” because I just talked to someone this week who wasn’t sure what their family was doing for the holidays. So, yeah, people wait until the last minute. Of course, I am a planner, and I plan way in advance.

Tim: Sometimes, when you plan, it kind of makes me feel like there’s nothing for me to do.

Elaine: Yeah.

Tim: That’s not good.

Elaine: Well, what I need to be better at is including you in the plan...like giving you more jobs to do.

Ti: I do like a list!

Elaine: I think if you had more jobs, you might enjoy it more. The holidays seem to be a time for family gatherings and connecting with old friends. Some people look forward to the holidays but other people would rather they just pass on by and not have them at all.

Tim: And, they do seem to come quicker the older we get, right?

Elaine: Yes. In fact, we were just talking yesterday morning about how this time last year we were talking about putting our house on the market.

US News & World Report, in an article entitled, *Why are the Holidays So Stressful?* States that:

“In a word: stress. According to one survey, 38 percent of people said their [stress level increases during the holidays](#). Another survey revealed that 53 percent of people feel financially stressed by holiday spending, even though more than half of the 1,000 respondents had created spending budgets.”

<https://health.usnews.com/wellness/mind/articles/2018-12-07/why-are-the-holidays-so-stressful>

There are lots of things can cause anxiety during the holidays when it comes to family gatherings. Things like:

- Seeing family members you haven't seen in a while, maybe years.
- Worrying about how you will appear to them.
- Worried that that “one family member” will make a scene.
- Anxiety over the convergence of different values and what the topics of conversations will be.

Other, more general things that can cause anxiety are:

- finances
- Getting that perfect gift
- Food preparations
- Where we will spend Christmas (especially if you are in a blended family)

BIBLICAL PASSAGE - Portrait of Conflict

Luke 10:38-42 - *Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. 39 And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. 40 But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me." 41 And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. 42 "But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her." (NKJV)*

Characteristics of Relational Conflict (in Mary and Martha's Relationship)

- This event is about Jesus (like Christmas)
 - We can easily overlook Jesus in the chaos of planning and busyness
- Misplaced (Different) Priorities
 - Mary and Martha had very different ideas of how this event should be conducted.
- Unspoken Expectations
 - Obviously, Martha expected the day to go differently from Mary
- Lack of Communication
 - Obviously, Mary and Martha have a communication problem (Lord, tell her...)

"Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things.

Worried means to take thought, be *anxious*

The Oxford dictionary defines worry as: *give way to anxiety or unease; allow one's mind to dwell on difficulty or troubles*. Synonyms are: *fret, agonize, brood*.

Troubled means to be *disturbed* and in *turmoil*, it could

Stress is a fact (or not). It is usually circumstantial. Pressure(expectations) from demands.

Anxiety is an internal reaction to stress (my circumstances).

- Anxiety takes place within me
- My INTERPRETATION of circumstances determines my REACTION.

Philippians 4:6-7 - *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

What can we do to prepare for a peaceful Christmas and stay connected to the ones we love?

- Assess expectations
 - Are these realistic?
 - Discuss these with your spouse, children, etc.
 - these may need to be adjusted to be more realistic
- Allow for unplanned (unexpected) problems.

John 16:33 - *These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation [troubles]; but be of good cheer [take comfort], I have overcome the world.*

- Focus on the positive
 - It's about Jesus
 - It's about family
 - It's about joy
 - It's about life
- Schedule in time for rest/relaxation