

## Creating Memories and Managing Holidays

2009

Let's face it, the old saying "You can please some of the people some of the time, but you can't please all of the people all of the time" is never more true than when it comes to where you are going to spend the holidays.

When you add stepparents, siblings, and grandparents, you can become torn in so many directions that the joy of the holiday can be drained away. The goal is to come up with a plan that is acceptable to both spouses so that everyone comes out a winner.

An exercise that will help get the conversation started toward a win/win result is to get out a sheet of paper and write down each holiday that could possibly be spent outside your family nest.

Next, list the way you would like to spend each holiday individually. This column will likely be largely based on what your family traditions were like while you were growing up. Also list the feelings you have associated with the holiday. Finally you will have to compromise with lots of understanding and be willing to use positive communication techniques to decide what you will



**Family Life Ministry at OPC** is committed through the power and guidance of the living God to help families:

- Know and trust Jesus Christ – growing in their relationships with him.
- Build healthy relationships – enjoying and nurturing one another.
- Connect with others in the body of Christ – knowing they belong and have a home here in which to experience discipleship and mentoring.
- Minister to the world (the home, neighborhood, workplace and beyond) – becoming God's life-giving, life-changing agents.

do for each holiday as a couple.

Some of the questions to consider are:

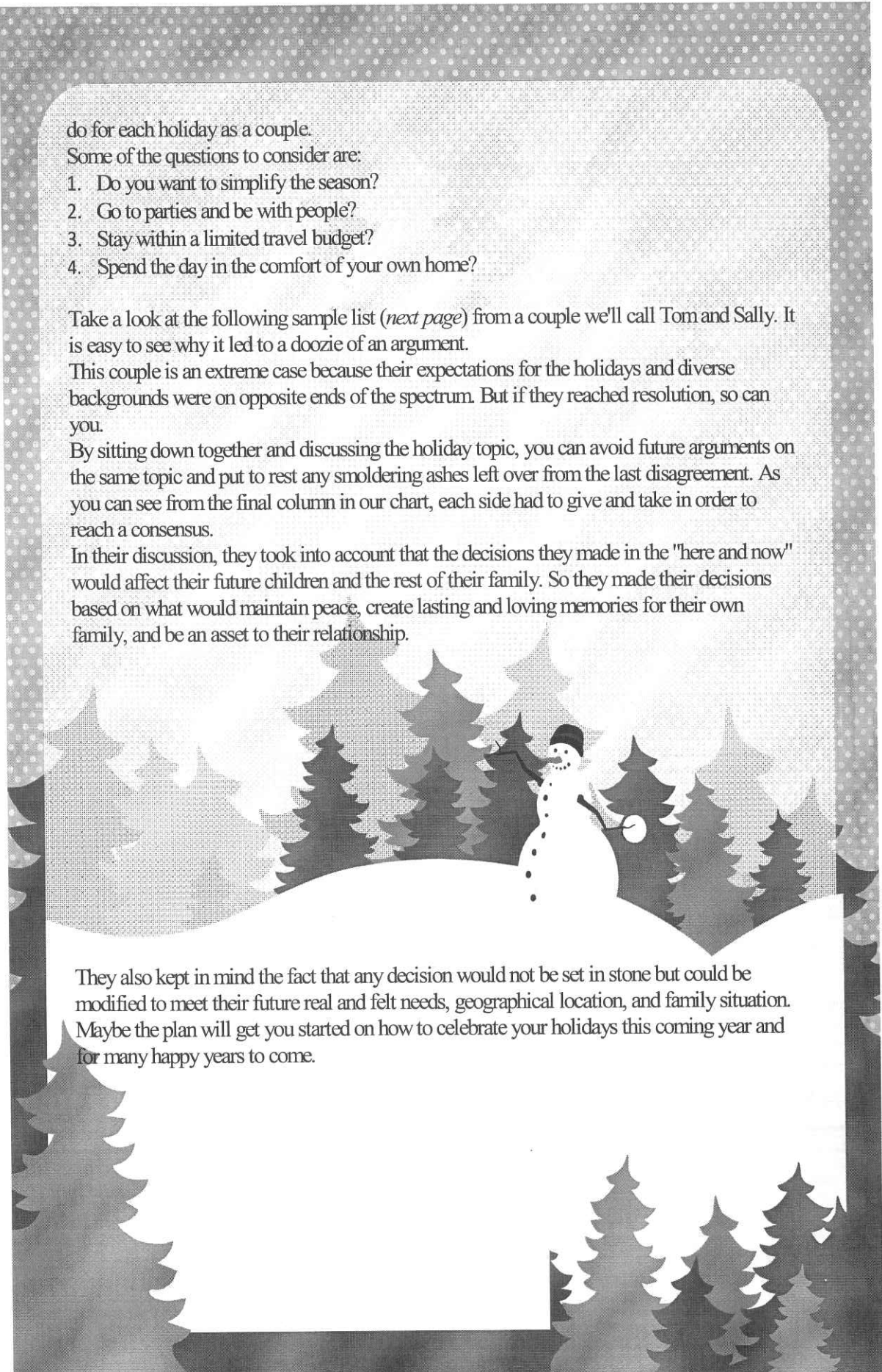
1. Do you want to simplify the season?
2. Go to parties and be with people?
3. Stay within a limited travel budget?
4. Spend the day in the comfort of your own home?

Take a look at the following sample list (*next page*) from a couple we'll call Tom and Sally. It is easy to see why it led to a doozie of an argument.

This couple is an extreme case because their expectations for the holidays and diverse backgrounds were on opposite ends of the spectrum. But if they reached resolution, so can you.

By sitting down together and discussing the holiday topic, you can avoid future arguments on the same topic and put to rest any smoldering ashes left over from the last disagreement. As you can see from the final column in our chart, each side had to give and take in order to reach a consensus.

In their discussion, they took into account that the decisions they made in the "here and now" would affect their future children and the rest of their family. So they made their decisions based on what would maintain peace, create lasting and loving memories for their own family, and be an asset to their relationship.



They also kept in mind the fact that any decision would not be set in stone but could be modified to meet their future real and felt needs, geographical location, and family situation. Maybe the plan will get you started on how to celebrate your holidays this coming year and for many happy years to come.

Holiday Celebration Worksheet / Year of \_\_\_\_\_

Christmas

Sally	Tom	Compromise
1. Christmas Eve church services	1. Open presents on Christmas Eve	1. Go to services, when available, and open one gift on Christmas Eve
2. Up at 6:00 a.m. to read Christmas store from the Bible	2. Sleep in late and wear pajamas most of the day	2. Tom sleeps in, and they read the Bible story when he wakes up (by 10:00 a.m.)
3. Open presents one at a time, thanking between each one	3. Few presents (the holidays were downplayed)	3. Three gifts, opened one at a time
4. Formal dinner at Grandma's house	4. Pizza or whatever (maybe tacos)	4. They realize the holiday can have the significance you give it
5. Ice-skating in the afternoon	5. Watch football games and then take a nap	5. Football in the afternoon and caroling at night (when possible)
6. Christmas-caroling at night	6. No particular traditions (Christmas is just commercialism)	

## Christmas

### Photo Greeting Cards

We have photos made in October and get the savings of an early-bird discount on photo greeting cards. If you try this beginning in your first year of marriage, it will be fun to see how your family changes as the years go by. We even put together a special Christmas photo album, and it's a wonderful place to display our annual photo greeting cards and an effective way to preserve memories.

### **Simplify**

The reason we keep our gift-giving simple is not because we're cheap. It's because we want to keep the focus on the Reason for the Season. Holiday mania detracts from the coming of the Christ Child as God's greatest gift to us.

### **Three Gifts**

Part of the Kay Family Simplification Plan involves the number of gifts each of our children receive. This could also apply to each spouse, before the kids start coming along. I'll never forget one Christmas before we had children. Bob and I watched a little boy get so many gifts for Christmas that he got tired of opening them and quit. Sadly, he was so spoiled by his parents and grandparents that he had the mistaken notion that Christmas was all about him.

### **Sharing Christmas**

Sometimes the gift of time is the greatest gift of all during the holidays. There are a number of ways you and your spouse can brighten the holidays of those around you and share the season. We like to visit nursing homes and spend time with the residents, talking and sharing. If you know of an elderly relative, neighbor, or friend who rarely gets to decorate for the holidays, why not help that person put up a tree and holiday lights? Then, after the season is over, help them put the decorations away.

One of the traditions on military bases is a holiday cookie drive. Last year we collected ten thousand dozen cookies and distributed them to the police department, the fire department, and others who worked the holiday shift. You could take a basket of goodies to your local firefighters or police officers on duty. I know they would enjoy these treats on Christmas Eve! We even bake cookies for the mail carriers and sanitation workers. We place these in easy-to-carry plastic bags and include a can of soda pop.

### **Mission of Joy**

One final idea is to adopt a developing-country child at this time of the year and sponsor him/her year-round. A portion of the proceeds of my books goes to an organization that helps orphans in India called Mission of Joy. We also send out their brochures with every product order we receive on our Web site.

*A gift is a demonstration of love from one heart to another. Calvin Miller once sent me an acrostic poem that spelled out my name. You cherish those special, personal gifts. — Chuck Swindoll, Tale of the Tardy Ox Cart*

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