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## How to Enjoy the *Christmas Season*

When we're traveling, we often stop at Cracker Barrel to eat breakfast. The gift shop cracks me up. One of their whimsical signs that you can purchase says, "I'll be home for Christmas and in therapy by New Year's." If your family is more like the TV show, the Waltons, then you probably don't need to read this. However, if you identified with the Cracker Barrel sign, this might help you.

*Here are five suggestions that will ensure that you enjoy the Christmas Season.*

### 1. The first secret is to get your expectations down.

I mean waaayyyy down. Maybe the turkey will be tough this year. Maybe someone will break one of your wedding plates that are no longer available. One of your children might embarrass you in front of your sister-in-law's perfect kids. Your husband may sit on the sofa and watch football instead of offering to help. Your teenager's boyfriend brought mud in on your new carpet. Get your expectations down and then when good things happens, you can enjoy them. Lowering expectations of a "Hallmark" Christmas is step one.

**2. Secret number two is to decide not to be offended.** Aunt Martha is going to make a comment about your weight. Cousin Henry rsvp'd but didn't show up and you waited an hour on him. Someone will ask you if you've read any of the new parenting books, suggesting that it's obvious you need to. Your husband will ask you if you read the recipe carefully because this dish doesn't taste like his mother's. Your sister-in-law will talk to one of your other sisters the whole time, clearly demonstrating her preference for her. Your brother's girlfriend signed up for dessert and brought one pie to feed 20 people. Just get ready. Decide now to "overlook a transgression". Just let it pass.

**3. Secret number three is to SAW.** We rush around with the linens and the decorations, but we forget the main thing: the people we love. It's easy to go through the entire holidays, and not express affection to those that we care about. SAW stands for "sensitivity, affection, and warmth". Pick out some people you love, and be sure and SAW them in an obvious manner. Tell your teenagers how proud of them you are for some character quality. Tell your mother how much you appreciate the example she's given you. Tell your dad that you will always be "daddy's girl". Tell your son that you always knew he'd be a great father. Express these things. We all long to hear them. But focus on how you give and love, not on how others give and love you.

**4. Secret number four is to make a decision to overcome your normal negative tendency to focus on what is wrong and instead, command your mind to focus on all that is right.** Before I got out of bed this morning, I realized I had 4 negative thoughts already. Enough of that, I said. I started thinking and listing the 1000's of blessings that I have. You have 1000's of blessings, too. If we could hook your brain up to a computer and see your thoughts, that would explain your mood issues. Negative thoughts make negative moods. Happy thoughts make happy moods. You get to choose your thoughts. Get rid of the troublemakers. List your problems in your journal, pray diligently over them, get counsel to help you deal with them, and take massive daily action to proactively solve them. Then, put your problems on a shelf in heaven. The Accuser will beat you up with your weaknesses and with the WMD (what's missing and disappointing) if you don't "gird up the loins of your mind". Your mind is a vast empire and you are the Emperor. You get to choose what you think about. You create your inner world by choosing your thoughts. That's why Philipians 4: 8 tells us what to think about. Thoughts produce corresponding emotions.

**5. And secret number five, as you expected, is to spend time in prayer before the holidays.** Pretty table linens can be bought at Bed, Bath, and Beyond, but there's only one place to get the peace that passes understanding.



David and his family at a recent wedding in Nashville

By Julie N. Gordon  
juliengordon.com

*Have a great Christmas!*

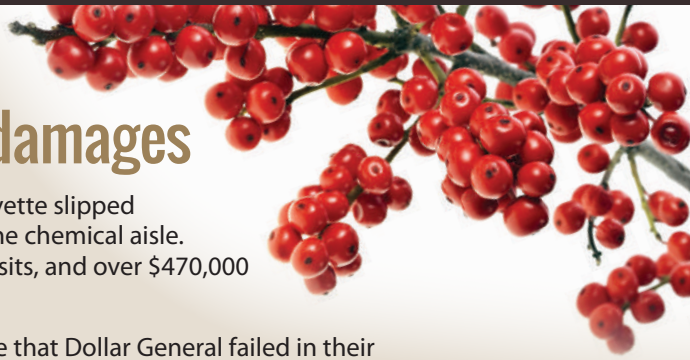
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## Dollar General loses Alabama case, must pay **\$1.725 MILLION** in damages

On July 9, 2012 at a Dollar General in Mobile, Alabama, 60-year-old Deborah Revette slipped and fell on a puddle of clear laundry detergent that was spilled on the floor of the chemical aisle. The resulting injuries to her leg and shoulder required 8 surgeries, 395 doctor visits, and over \$470,000 in medical bills. Revette is now permanently disabled.

Four years later and justice has been done. An Alabama jury agreed with Revette that Dollar General failed in their duty to keep their customers safe and awarded the plaintiff \$1.725 million in damages. Inadequate inspection policies by the corporate retailer were found to have led to the dangerous conditions. Despite being open 14 hours per day, Dollar General only required employees to spend 10 minutes per day on safety inspections. These safety inspections are informal, undocumented, and are not verified by a supervisor.

This is the second large settlement against Dollar General this year in Alabama alone. In the other case, a delivery driver was severely injured due to his truck being packed in an unsafe manner. The jury awarded the driver \$925,000 in damages. Cases like these, and the penalties imposed, will hopefully spur Dollar General and other corporations to place more emphasis on safety.



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*A truck hit us and totaled our car. That threw life as we knew it, into a topsy-turvy spin. An accident completely inverts your life. Calling David Gordon was like the weight of the world had been taken off our shoulders. It was very important to know that he was board-certified. He treats your claim, no matter how large or small, like it's the most important thing in the world to him.*

-Bill D.



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## DROWSY DRIVING stay awake to arrive safe

You have heard about distracted driving, but drowsy driving? Falling asleep at the wheel is a much more common problem than most people realize. According to the National Sleep Foundation's 2005 *Sleep in America* poll, 60% of adult drivers say they have driven while feeling drowsy in the past year and 37% admit to falling asleep at the wheel.

It is difficult to fully determine how much damage drowsy driving causes but the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration conservatively estimates that 100,000 police-reported crashes are the direct result of driver fatigue each year. They say this results in an estimated 1,550 deaths, 71,000 injuries, and \$12.5 billion in monetary losses.

Fatigue and sleep deprivation can lead to lapses in focus and judgment. Drowsy drivers are more likely to be stressed and impatient, and they tend to drive faster. Driving, like any other difficult activity, requires focus and concentration. Driving drowsy makes it much more difficult to maintain the necessary level of focus and concentration, making accidents more likely.

Being aware of the danger of drowsy driving is often enough to help prevent it. If you haven't gotten enough sleep in the past 24 hours or are just feeling too tired to drive, a short nap or a cup of coffee or other caffeinated beverage may be enough to help. Of course, the best way to avoid the dangers of drowsy driving is to get enough sleep in the first place! Not only will getting a good night's sleep make it easier to safely operate a vehicle, it is also an important part of overall health and well-being.

