

The Function of Celebration

I. Celebration is an act of Worship.

- Celebration is worship.
- When we set aside our desires and submit to God's will for our lives, we're celebrating Him. It may be a merry event full of singing and food and games, or it may be in the quiet struggle where we push aside temptation and simply obey the Lord.
- Of course, the opposite is true. When we knowingly or ignorantly set aside God's expectations and push forward in our own understanding and for our own glory . . . in that moment we're celebrating the tiny "g" god of self.

II. Celebration is obedience to our created Rhythm.

- Whether it's a weekly day of rest or stopping work to commemorate what God has done or it's overcoming our slavish lust for self . . . each of those is submission to the rhythms God's injected into our very cells.

III. Celebration is a wonderful Teaching and Training tool.

- You may be familiar with words like catechism and liturgy. Both of those words embrace the age-old adage that repetition aids learning and practice makes permanent. Let's consider a perfect Celebration of God example.
- Imagine if every year, on the 6th day of Advent your children open their Advent Box and find a slice of chocolate with a piece of paper neatly wrapped around it. When they unwrap that paper they read the following verse from Revelation 21:3-4, "*And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, 4 and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.'*"
- And your family makes a habit of explaining the passage and encouraging the children to memorize a portion or the entire two verses. Those verses are then revisited around the dinner table that evening and everyone shares one brief thing that excites them about Christ's future coming. And imagine your child who is now 5 does this year after year after year.
- It won't be long before those Truths start to take hold. Many children — once reaching adulthood — will have those memories and verses come to mind in the weeks preceding Christmas as they remember with fondness the love of the Lord that was in your home.
- That one verse on that one day of Advent is a perfect way to teach your kids about what Jesus is going to do when He sets up His eternal kingdom.

IV. Celebration is a wonderful Teaching and Training tool.

- According to Merriam-Webster, to commemorate means "to call to remembrance" and "to serve as a memorial."
- Whether we're remembering what God did for us through Jesus Christ's substitutionary atonement on the cross and resurrection from the dead, or taking time to appreciate our children's lives on their birthdays . . . celebration memorializes.
- This was the original idea behind the stained glass windows in churches. Congregants who couldn't read would be able to see biblical Truth displayed in the windows and through the other art forms in the church.

- Every act of worship to God should make it easier to remember to live for God as well as it makes it easier to commemorate what God has done for us.
- Here's a beautiful example for the New Testament believer: Every time we celebrate the Lord's Supper, we do it in remembrance of Christ "*For as often as [we] eat this bread and drink the cup, [we] proclaim the Lord's death until He comes*" (1 Corinthians 11:24-26).

V. Celebration is a lot of Fun.

- Yahweh is the perfect example of joy and peace and fun. He created fun. He loves for His people to rejoice and be glad — even when the situations in their lives are difficult.
- We should worry greatly about the maturity of a professing Christian who thinks going to church and reading the Scriptures and praying and singing and celebrating God is boring. How on earth could it be boring?! God is awesome. He's done so much for us that needs to be celebrated and remembered. The problem is not that celebrating what is good isn't any fun, the problem is that our hearts are sinful.
- John 3:19-21 says, "*This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. 20 For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. 21 But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.*"
 - The light is all things beautiful and perfect and holy and right and fun and glorious. The dark represented here is that which steals and kills and destroys. Sin hurts; righteousness gives life.
 - Our churches and families and small groups should be encouraged to have the right kind of fun. We need to teach them how to really enjoy being a follower of Christ. We need to make our celebrations of God — both the High Days and the Low Moments — an enjoyable experience.
 - Spiritual immaturity deceives us into thinking that sin and self-worship are more fun than serving God. Hebrews 11:25 teaches that sin can give us pleasure, but only for a season. It's passing and quickly fades and leaves us wanting more.
 - But a relationship with God satisfies to the uttermost.
 - Still, it's a spiritual battle. We can't do it on our own. We defiantly need the power of the Holy Spirit to experience the joy that comes from celebrating God, but it's a deep fountain of glorious peace and contentment when we finally have the pleasure of bathing in it.

God created celebration to accomplish various functions. By it we worship God, by it we can enjoy the rhythms God created us to experience, by it we can teach and learn, by it we can remember, and by it we can have a lot of fun!