



Review Quiet time... any thoughts on what you tried out this week?

- Develop a purpose, pattern, place, and plan for your daily devotional time.
- Put into practice what we did today.

Last on the Mr. Sunshine ballot

not the only one, widespread among Christians

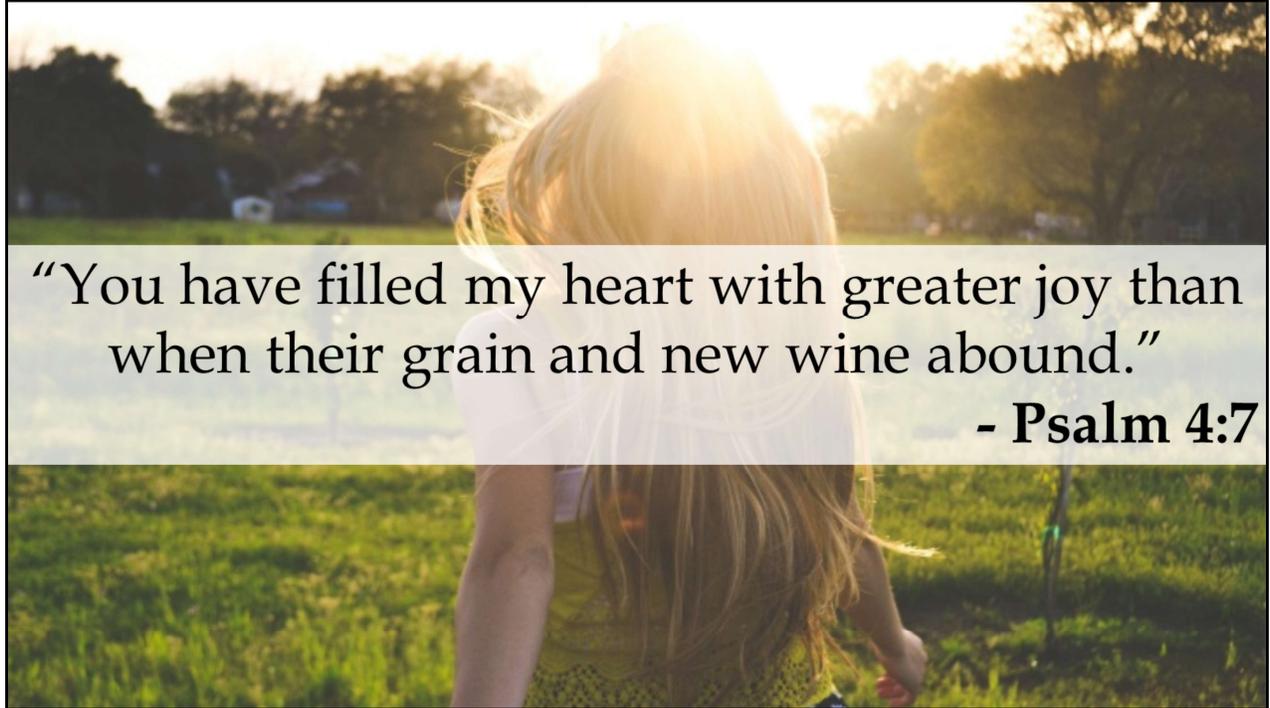
Leonard Sweet: "kind people in a bad mood"

Shame for not feeling joy

football/NCAA tournament

"church should be fun"

but anybody can have that kind of "joy"



“You have filled my heart with greater joy than  
when their grain and new wine abound.”

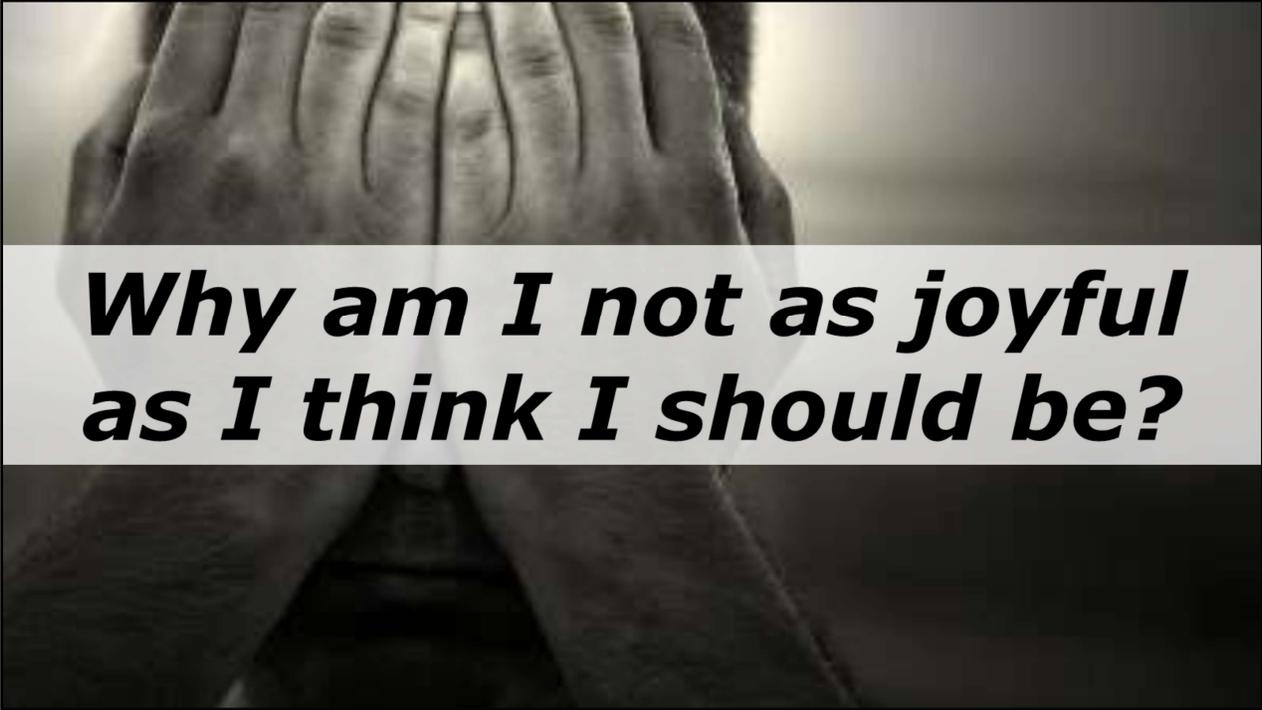
**- Psalm 4:7**

But that’s not true for most Christians.

Has become a burden, added items on the list of what we must do.

Light, easy burden Jesus promised us just doesn’t seem true.

Sucked into the same escapes or tempted to indulge in the same pleasures



***Why am I not as joyful  
as I think I should be?***

***Do you ever feel guilty about not having enough joy as a Christian?***

We know something's missing, something's wrong, but we don't know how to fix it.

Most of us think it should "just happen"

part of what Jesus promised

part of the fruit of the Spirit

When it doesn't we start believing deep down one of two things...

"I'm not a good enough Christian to be joyful" (I am inadequate for joy)

God isn't coming through on what he promised (God is inadequate for joy)



But I want us to consider a couple of “what ifs.” What if...

obtaining joy required focused attention on taking hold of it?

it is the duty of every believer to consider what biblical joy is, how to obtain it, and how to discipline your life for joy?

The choice to take hold of the joy God has promised → discipline of celebration



# ***Why Celebrate?***

**Provides needed  
balance**

*“a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time  
to mourn and a time to dance.”*

**- Ecclesiastes 3:4**

Why celebration?

Celebration reflects God-ordained **balance**:

Ecclesiastes 3:4—“a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance”



## ***Why Celebrate?***

“Celebration is central to all the Spiritual Disciplines. Without a joyful spirit of festivity the Disciplines become dull, death-breathing tools in the hands of modern Pharisees... Without joyous celebration to infuse the other Disciplines, we will sooner or later abandon them. Joy produces energy. Joy makes us strong..”

- Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*

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# ***Why Celebrate?***

**Joy makes us  
strong**

*"...The joy of the Lord is your strength."  
- Nehemiah 8:10*

Nehemiah 8: "the joy of the Lord is your strength"

(story)



# ***What is the Discipline of Celebration?***

What is the discipline of celebration?

What is a spiritual discipline? It's something you can choose to do that will train you to do something you can't now do by direct effort.

Can't muster joy out of nothing... can choose to celebrate...

What does the discipline of celebration look like? Where do we find it in Scripture?



Our choice to pursue joy... because God promises it... because he commands that we rejoice

Philippians 4:4-5: "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near."

How could God *command* joy? Isn't joy a feeling? Can God command us how to feel?

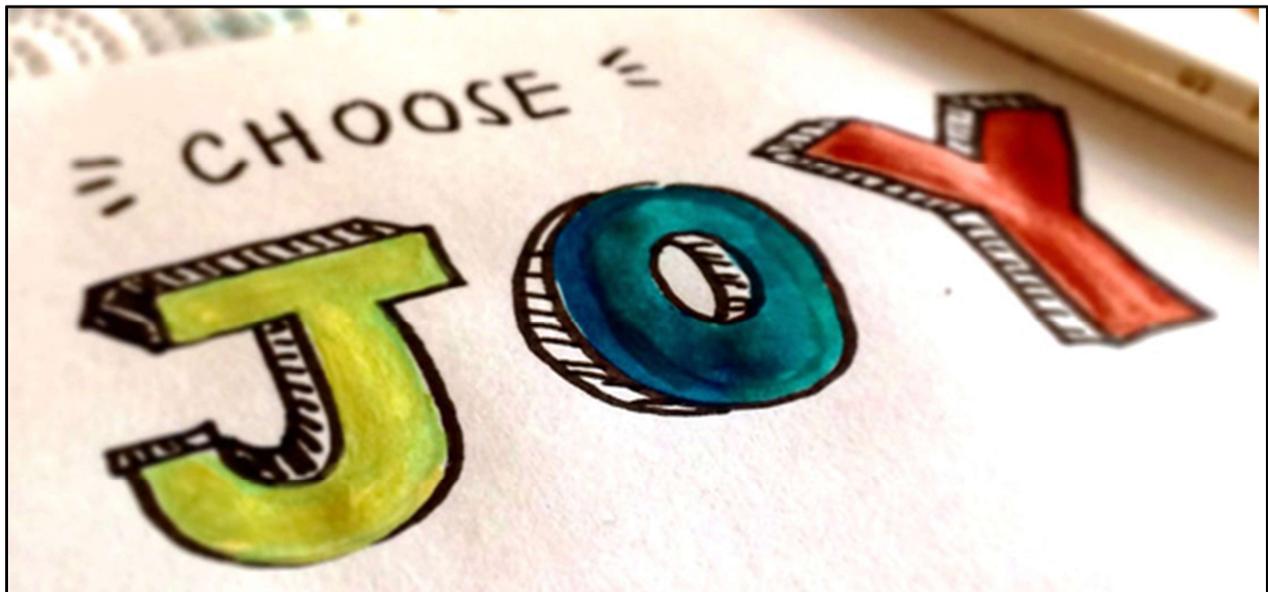
The first step understanding this concept is to understanding that joy is both a gift and a command.

Gift

can't muster it up and you can't fake it  
it's "greater" joy than worldly pleasure, which is based on circumstances, diversions, and substances.

world's joy: emotional outburst that springs out of general happiness; happiness based on things going your way.

Joy in the bible is deeper than happiness.



*Not based on circumstances, but it is tied to obedience*

Starts with everyday obedience

Can only expect seasons of fragile happiness outside of God's will

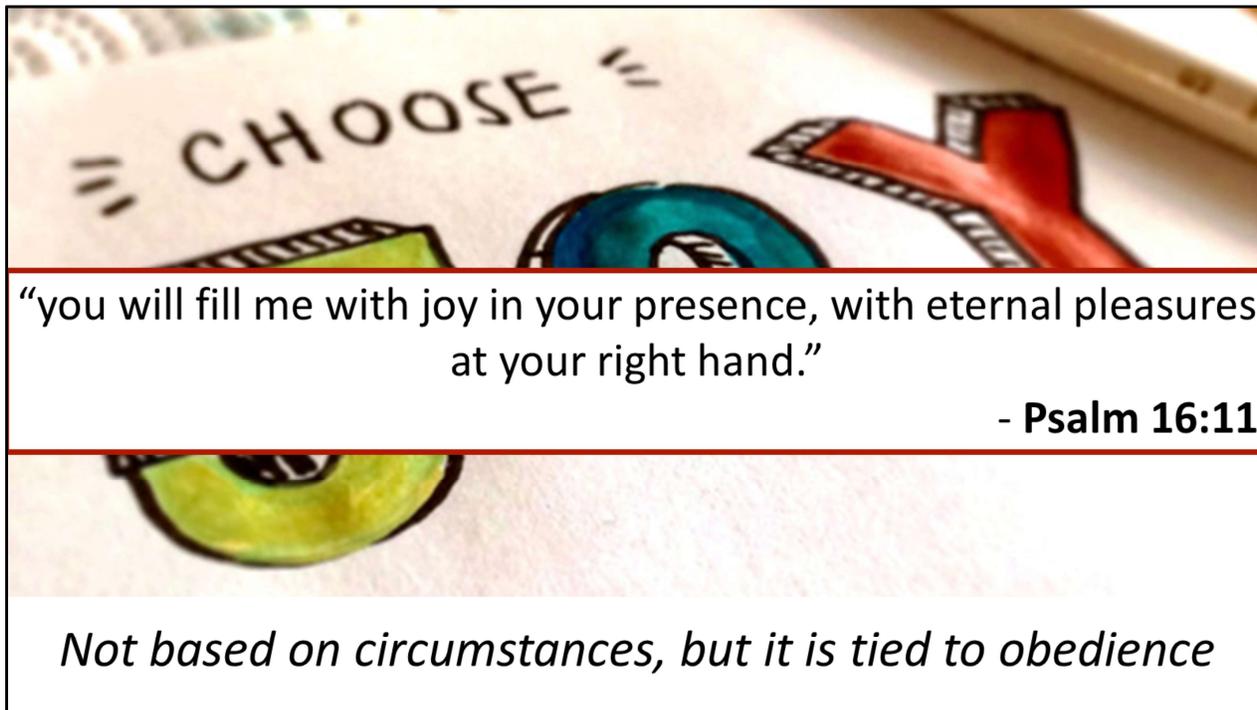


“If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.” - **John 15:10-11**

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John 15:10-11: “If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.”

To remain close to Jesus and to experience the joy that he gives, we have to obey. Obedience is the only way to walking closer to God, and close communion with God is a source of joy.



“you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.”

- Psalm 16:11

*Not based on circumstances, but it is tied to obedience*

Psalm 16:11: “you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.”

So we’re back to where we started ...

Are we “not obeying enough”? Do we just need to buckle down and obey better and that will solve everything?

Well, you could do your best to obey God in all aspects, expecting joy to come along with the obedience, but you run the risk of reducing our devotion to God to dutiful drudgery that leaves you depressed and joyless and – worst of all – doesn’t please God.

***Do you think joyless obedience pleases God?***

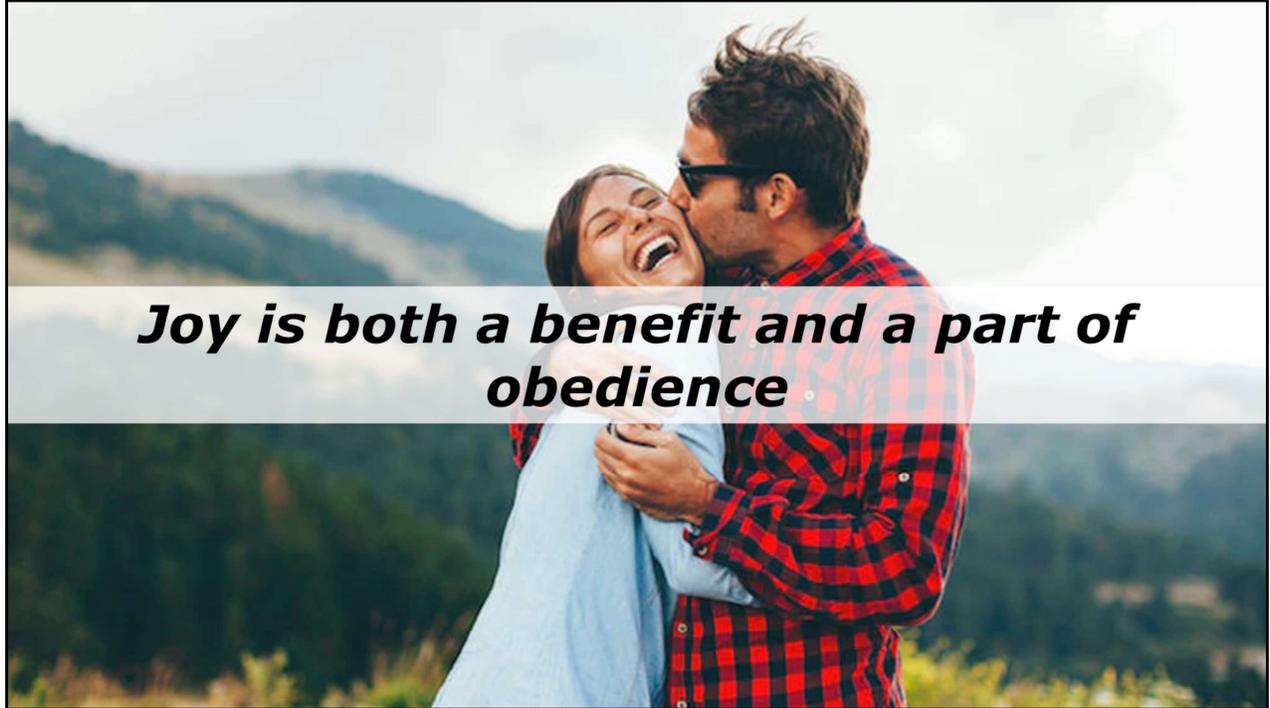


Valentine's illustration

ads: "stay out of trouble"

If that motivation comes through when you give it to her, your actions are worthless

relationships: you can do everything "right," but if you're just "putting in your time" – if there's not joy, no delight in the experience – then all of it hollow and a waste of time, because genuine love requires delight.



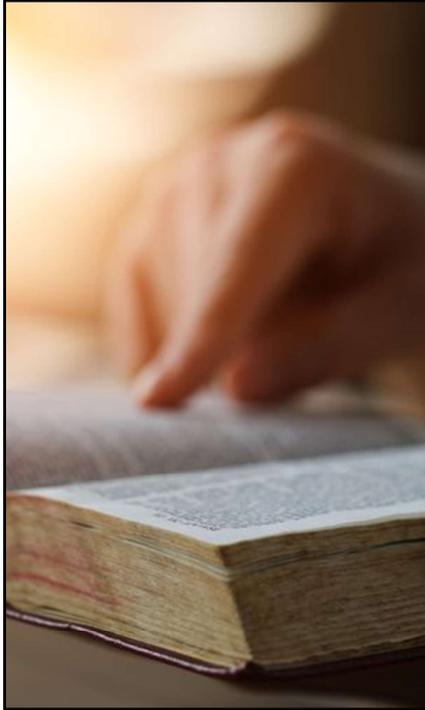
The greatest commandment: love God, love people. And obedience to God's number one command – the command for love – requires delight.

exchanging obedience for joy (or anything else) isn't love, it's manipulation.

love seeks to please the other because it delights in the opportunity to express its affection.

God doesn't delight in our obedience when we do it because we must; it is when those things are our delight!

So joy is both a benefit and a part of obedience.



## ***Biblical Examples***

- Biblical festivals
- Commands surrounding the tithe
- Nehemiah's command
- Paul's commands to rejoice.

That's why God made joy part of the commands for us to obey...

- Biblical festivals
- Commands surrounding the tithe

- Nehemiah's command
- Paul's commands to rejoice.



## ***Why Celebrate?***

“Circumstances seldom generate smiles and laughter. Joy comes to those who determine to pursue it in spite of their circumstances.”

- Chuck Swindoll

“Circumstances seldom generate smiles and laughter. Joy comes to those who determine to pursue it in spite of their circumstances.”

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**- So how do we do it? How do we practice the discipline of celebration?**



# ***How Do We Practice the Discipline of Celebration?***

What is the discipline of celebration?

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## ***Goal of Celebration***

“Many people try to come into joy far too soon. Often we try to pump people up with joy when in reality nothing has happened in their lives... Celebration comes when the common ventures of life are redeemed.”

**- Richard Foster**

Foster: “Many people try to come into joy far too soon. Often we try to pump people up with joy when in reality nothing has happened in their lives... Celebration comes when the common ventures of life are redeemed.”

***What practices help us to redeem our every day?***



## ***Celebrating God: what he has done***

*“Fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and the fat portions on the altar. And when all the people saw it, they shouted for joy and fell facedown.”*

**- Leviticus 9:24**

specific acts, revelations of God:

Leviticus 9:24: “Fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and the fat portions on the altar. And when all the people saw it, they shouted for joy and fell facedown.”



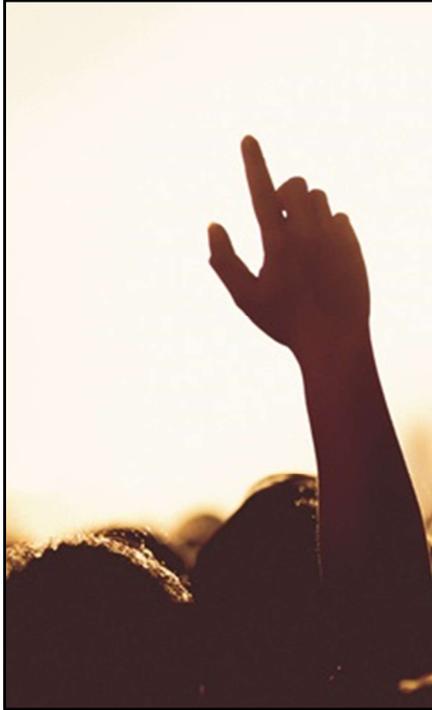
## ***Celebrating God: His blessings***

*“For you make me glad by your deeds,  
O LORD; I sing for joy at the works  
of your hands.”*

**- Psalm 92:4**

remembering and realizing God’s blessing:

Psalm 92:4: “For you make me glad by your deeds, O LORD; I sing for joy at the works of your hands.”



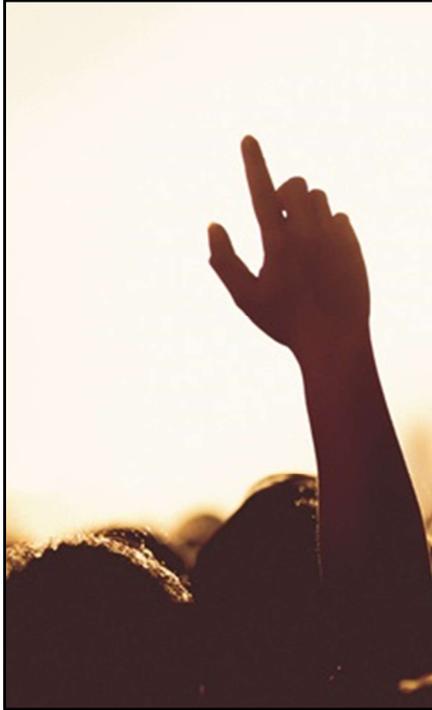
## ***Celebrating God: who he is***

*“They rejoice in your name all day  
long; they exult in your  
righteousness.”*

**- Psalm 89:16**

understanding and experiencing God’s character:

Psalm 89:16: “They rejoice in your name all day long; they exult in your righteousness.”



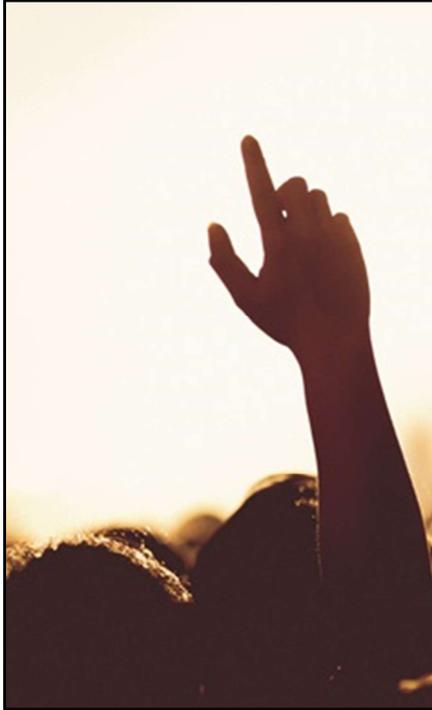
## ***Celebrating God: what he will do***

*“Shout for joy, O heavens; rejoice, O earth; burst into song, O mountains! For the LORD comforts his people and will have compassion on his afflicted ones.”*

**- Isaiah 49:13**

anticipating the future blessings of God:

Isaiah 49:13: “Shout for joy, O heavens; rejoice, O earth; burst into song, O mountains! For the LORD comforts his people and will have compassion on his afflicted ones.”



## ***What do you need to do to celebrate God more?***

*“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things.”*

**- Philippians 4:8**

***What do you need to do to celebrate God more?***



## ***Celebrate Life***

- Other disciplines: Sabbath, slowing
- “Dee-da” days
- Prioritize life-giving activities

- Other disciplines: Sabbath, slowing
- “Dee-da” days
  - Find ways to play in your life
- Prioritize life-giving things

What “fills your bucket”? (Important to know)



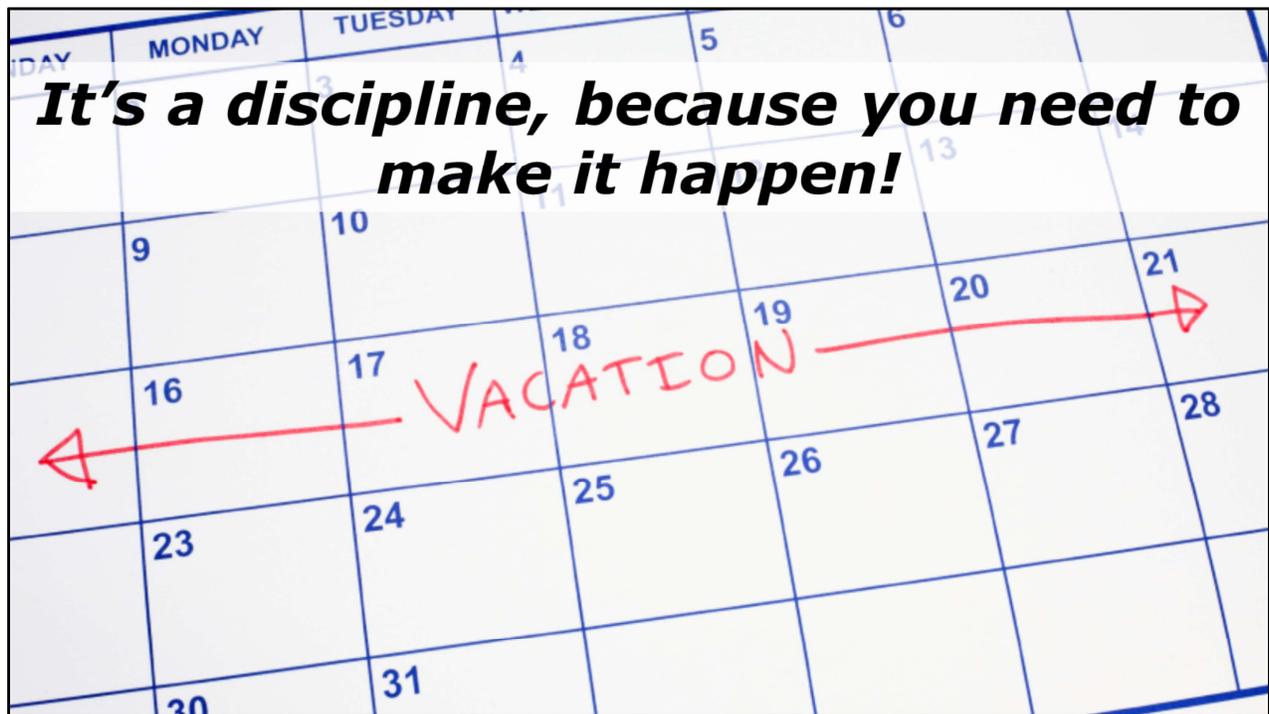
## ***Celebrate Together***

- Prioritize life-giving relationships
- Learn to play with your spouse and family
- Keep and celebrate traditions

We have a culture that increasingly isolates us from one another...

Who is it that you get a “sore face” when you’re around?

Spend time with one another!



***It's a discipline, because you need to make it happen!***

This is a less obvious spiritual discipline than others....

But one of the most important aspects of our life – joy – is dependent on it...

There are spontaneous moments of joy/celebration... but more often you need to make them happen...

We need the discipline of celebration!!

***(If time, have them brainstorm in groups for how they will choose to celebrate this week... and in their life in general)***

## Challenge for This Week

- Put a life-giving activity on your calendar.
- Schedule time with someone who gives you joy.
- Set aside time to celebrate before the Lord or with just one or two others.

Weekly challenge:

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