



INTRODUCTION

Keep Calm—and Party On

The holidays are coming.

What's supposed to be a season of joy and celebration, often is not. We find ourselves distracted by preparations, overwhelmed by expectations, or depressed by our own circumstances. Let's learn how we can make the holidays enjoyable and meaningful!

We'll discover how to take a biblical approach to the holidays, and explore how we can be present, keep calm, and survive the season.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Did your family have any special Thanksgiving or Christmas traditions when you were growing up? What were they? Are there special things you do to make the holiday more meaningful?
2. Do you think it's harder these days for people to be joyful than it used to be? Explain your answer.
3. Read Psalm 100; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 and Philippians 4:4. Why do you think God wants us to be joyful and thankful as Christians? Is it realistic to expect that we can always be thankful and joy-filled?
4. Read Ecclesiastes 2:24-26. Solomon discovered that happiness is found in knowing God and walking in step with him. Do you agree that this is a key to happiness? Why or why not?
5. Do you think Christians should party? Explain your answer. Read Ephesians 4:17-24 and Ephesians 5:18-20. How should Christian celebrations differ from the celebrations of those who don't know Christ?
6. Do you personally struggle being happy, joyful or thankful? How can we grow in our ability to rejoice in all God is and all he has done for us?
7. How might you apply this lesson to your life?

APPLICATION

The holiday season is a time to celebrate and experience joy with others. Each week we can celebrate as we set aside a Sabbath Day to rest, reflect, and rejuvenate. But holidays, such as Thanksgiving and Christmas, can provide us with greater opportunities to celebrate. So many people don't stop to enjoy life, and they end up missing out on happiness. It's God's will that we be joyful and thankful. He wants that for us because that's the way He is—He loves joy.

Celebrations bring a joyful balance to our lives. In other words, there is more to life than just work, responsibilities, and surviving. **Celebrations unite us with others.** When we celebrate along with others, they add joy to the occasion. And most importantly, **celebrations bring glory to God.** Celebrating and rejoicing are a reminder of what God has done for you and a celebration of Him. We can enjoy life because of Him, and we need to make space in our lives to celebrate!

KEY VERSES (HCSB)

Psalm 100:1-5
Ephesians 5:18-20
Ecclesiastes 2:24-25
Deuteronomy 5:12, 15
Exodus 23:14-17
1 Thessalonians 5:16-18
Philippians 4:4
Ephesians 4:17-24