

Did You Know There's Warfare in Your Celebration?

For national holidays, there are fireworks and patriotic songs. For birthdays, there are flaming candles mounted atop delicious cake. For anniversaries, we have opulent rings and festive parties.

But it doesn't stop there. From flowers to parades to balloons to dancing, we have to be honest and admit we love to celebrate life's special moments. When the occasion calls for it, the invitations are sent, and the people gather to enjoy the moment together.

In culture today it can seem as if special moments have become commercialized by businesses hoping to capitalize on an opportunity. But the reason the opportunity is present is because celebrating is important for the human soul.

It's only natural, and basically imprinted on our DNA. But as important as the big moments of life can be, as followers of Jesus, we have the opportunity to celebrate and rejoice in our everyday because of who our God is and what He's done.

Like children who count their half-birthdays or the mathematically challenged who finally solve the algebra equation correctly, we too can enjoy the seemingly smaller milestones along the journey. Yes, the destination remains our focus and is worthy of recognition, but that doesn't keep us from enjoying the steps toward that destination in our everyday.

"This is the day that the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it" (Ps. 118:24).

In God's relationship with the young nation of Israel, He gave them several instructions as to how they could live a

prosperous life. Instead of solely focusing on how they could yield the biggest harvests in a planting season or raise the strongest livestock, He set the foundation for the fullness He was offering to a people who would feel the persuasive pressure of an ungodly culture and the challenge to break forth and maintain a promise.

While the Israelites were still in the land of Egypt, the Lord gave the following instructions to Moses and Aaron: "From now on, this month will be the first month of the year for you.

"This is a day to remember. Each year, from generation to generation, you must celebrate it as a special festival to the Lord. This is a law for all time" (Ex. 12:1-2, 14, NLT).

Before they were even to step foot on the pathway to the promised land, the Lord called done what they had only dreamed of and commanded them to celebrate what they had yet to see.

After generations of living in a foreign land, countless prayers of freedom from slavery and promises seemingly going unfulfilled, everything changed. What began as just another normal day in a strange week of events became the launching point to a longing fulfilled, not just for the Israelites or Moses, but also for God. Once more, the Lord displayed His faithful nature and His character.

"God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He spoken, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?" (Num. 23:19, MEV).

In a great display of power and mercy, God's actions began to fulfill His promise to Abraham, already knowing that the Israelites would panic in the discomfort of Pharaoh's pursuit as they faced the Red Sea, would complain when faced with daily manna and would cower in fear and see themselves as orphaned grasshoppers when facing the promised land. Despite

their current circumstance and geographic location, despite what was to come (including the fact that the generation that left Egypt would not enter the promised land because of their unbelief and disobedience), the Lord instructed the people to celebrate as if they were completely free and living in the promise.

“Celebrate this Festival of Unleavened Bread, for it will remind you that I brought your forces out of the land of Egypt on this very day. This festival will be a permanent law for you; celebrate this day from generation to generation.

“Remember, these instructions are a permanent law that you and your descendants must observe forever. When you enter the land the Lord has promised to give you, you will continue to observe this ceremony. Then your children will ask, ‘What does this ceremony mean?’ And you will reply, ‘It is the Passover sacrifice to the Lord for He passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt.’

“The whole community of Israel must celebrate this Passover festival” (, 24-27a, 47, NLT).

Our life today is not too different from the times in which the Israelites lived, looking to God to fulfill their need despite their own perceived weakness and obvious lack. There were going to be challenges, and they were going to face trials, but the Lord wanted them to continue to remember what He had done and in whom they were placing their trust to fulfill the word that had been spoken.

God’s instructions to celebrate were not just about gathering with others and feeling good but were accompanied by commands to establish a legacy of His great faithfulness. By reminiscing the stories of old of the Lord’s great feats, the Israelites would set the framework of expectation for the next generation. This simple act would help anchor God’s people in His nature as gracious, the one who is slow to anger and

abounding in love. It would also provide understanding that celebrating, simply reminiscing with tangible action, was a key part of walking in relationship with God, thinking on what He has done, is doing and what He will do.

Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land of which the Lord swore to your fathers to give them, like the days of the heavens above the earth (Deut. 11:18-21, NKJV).

As the one who was, who is and who is to come, God is very present and intertwined in the details of our day-to-day. In our times of celebrating milestones, whether big or small, we are putting before our eyes the truth of what our great God has done and engaging in the expected hope of what is to come.

God is a joyful God of celebration who encourages us to celebrate and take joy in what He's doing. He is the one who has a feast prepared for us at the end of the age, even though we have yet to achieve the unity and godliness accessible to us as His children. Because of who God is, we can be joyful and rejoice when the full manifestation of a promise is seen. But there's also opportunity to rejoice and celebrate the beginning of the answer by the gift of faith we've been given.

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1).

The goal may be a home, marriage, children, retirement, ministry or even a business, but we can rejoice in the truth that God is with us in our not-quite-there-yet moments and that His goodness and glory are just as readily available now

as they were centuries ago. Yes, we want to see the fullness—and if we stay steady and trust Him, we will!—but God is constantly working and providing for us. And because His goodness and mercy are following us all the days of our lives, there is also much to celebrate in the simple moments of life as well.

When we remember His goodness and His past deeds, we add joy to the journey. Our eyes are opened to see what He's doing in our present situation. In every scenario, we receive greater freedom to see His handiwork in our lives and the lives of our loved ones. Once more, hope can arise to help us stay steady despite what we may see. We are reminded that we have His power on the inside to be like our Father, who rejoices to see the work begin, even in its smallest form.

So when the pressures of life increase, and the enemy heaves accusations upon us, we can remember we have an alternative. In the face of unexpected diagnoses, mounting bills or strained family relationships, we have a way to keep our mind fixed on Christ. We can celebrate what God has already done—the miracles of healing, the unexpected financial blessings and the reconciliation of relationships—and ask Him in those moments to help us see. Like Bartimaeus, we too can cry out, “Son of David have mercy on me! I want to see” (see Mark 10:46-52).

And in those moments, our eyes can be opened to see that He is the one who is faithful and true when everything else feels as unstable and temporary as it actually is. He is the one who is the same yesterday, today and forever.

The God who sees no obstacles, who knows no impossibilities, is working in our lives. And He is for us. He is victorious and all-powerful, kind and strong. And His work in our lives—regardless of how big or small we think it is, compared to the ultimate destination—is worth celebrating!

"Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!"
(Phil. 4:4).

What recent "small" moments of God's work in your life can you celebrate today? {eoa}

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