

Why 'YOLO' Is a Biblical Principle

In Israel, after Passover, the school year is practically over. This is not only because summer is around the corner, but almost every week until summer is punctuated with days off from school due to holidays and commemorative days.

We mark Passover, Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day), Yom HaZikaron (Israel Memorial Day), Yom HaAtzmaut (Israel Independence Day) and Shavuot (the Festival of Weeks) in the span of seven weeks. We are currently in the middle of this time period, and for my children, the countdown to summer vacation has already begun!

In our home, however, the days until summer are not the only days that we count during this time of year. In Leviticus 23:15-16 (NIV), the Bible tells us, "From the day after the Sabbath, the day you brought the sheaf of the wave offering, count off seven full weeks. Count off fifty days up to the day after the seventh Sabbath, and then present an offering of new grain to the Lord." These verses direct us to count the 50 days between Passover and The Festival of Weeks, also known as Shavuot. In Hebrew, the offering that marks the beginning of the counting is called the "omer," and counting these 50 days is known as *sefirat ha'omer*, which means, "counting the omer."

According to Jewish tradition, the origin of this counting goes back to the very first Passover. Right after the Israelites left Egypt, Moses informed them that they would be receiving the Word of God seven weeks later. The Israelites were so excited to receive the Bible that they counted the days until the day of revelation arrived. During that time, the Israelites also prepared spiritually. Since then, the Jewish people have counted these 50 days and designated them as a time for spiritual growth and development.

However, there is one significant difference in how we count the days of the omer and counting the days until summer. My children count down the days until summer, but the Jewish people count up the days until The Festival of Weeks, starting with day one and ending at day 50.

So what's the difference?

When we count down the days to an anticipated event, it increases how we perceive the value of the coming day. But at the same time, it decreases the value of all the days that fall in between. If day 10 is just a day that I must make it through in order to get to day 25, then I have robbed day 10 of its intrinsic value. When we count down the days to an event, we can mistakenly relate to those days as obstacles in our way, when the truth is that each day is a priceless gift from God.

This is why we count up toward Shavuot, The Festival of Weeks. It expresses our excitement for this special day without diminishing the days that lead up to it. Just as the ancient Israelites used these 50 days to prepare for receiving the Bible, we see each day as an opportunity for spiritual growth. Starting at day one, we grow a bit more each day so that by day 50, we have truly transformed. By counting up the days to Shavuot, we make every day count.

As we make our way toward summer, and as people around the world anticipate a return to life before the pandemic, I hope that we can take the message of counting the omer with us. It is wonderful to have good times to look forward to, but let's not forget the value of each and every moment.

Every day is an opportunity to bless others and grow closer to God. Every day is a chance to make a difference in the world and to make our lives matter. And if we have learned anything in the past year, it is that every day is a precious gift from God, filled with His abundant blessings. Let us say as King

David said, “This is the day that the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it” (Ps. 118:24, MEV).

The best way to thank God for another day is to make the most of it! For more on this topic, listen to *Nourish Your Biblical Roots* on the Charisma Podcast Network. {eoa}

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