

## WALKING IT OUT – WEEK 5 – CELEBRATION

### Defining celebration

The discipline of celebration is more than throwing a party (though that can be a part of it). True celebration purposefully directs our gaze towards heaven. It focuses our laughter, our joy, and our festivities on the Maker of all things good. In the Old Testament, times of feasting were transforming experiences, drawing people closer to the Father – just as much as prayer and/or fasting.

### **“It’s a holiday!”**

Did you know that the word “holiday” comes from the practice of “Holy Days”? These days were not only sacred, but they were fun and people looked forward to them. We often think of “disciplines” as a type of abstinence from things that make us happy or give us pleasure. However the Bible states quite the opposite.

Take, for example, Nehemiah...The prophet commanded the people to set aside the holy day and revel in it – eating “choice foods” and drinking “sweet drinks”. This was a day to celebrate all God had done! He said, *“Do not grieve, **for the joy of the Lord is your strength.**”* (Neh. 8:10)

How’s your joy? Do you celebrate God and take delight in all he’s done? Do you derive strength from the joy that He has placed in your heart?

The world will do its best to knock us down. Take a “holy day” (holiday) and allow God to penetrate your inner-most being with His joy... to strengthen you... to stand up... to celebrate!

### Questions to talk about at home and with your small group

- 1) When you think the word celebration, what comes to mind?
- 2) What do you celebrate?
- 3) What is the importance of celebrations?
- 4) What is your favorite holiday? Why?
- 5) On Sunday, we heard some great testimonies, what stood out to you?

### A prayer to see and share and celebrate

*Father God, giver of life and bringer of joy, be my strength. Open my eyes to the little things that will bring me joy. Help me to see your light in this world and celebrate your greatness. Help me to share the joy of celebration with my friends and family, so they can see your goodness.*

*In the name of Jesus, my Lord and Savior, Amen*

### Additional verses for study

Exodus 10:9, Psalm 145:7, Ecclesiastes 3:1-4, Luke, chapter 15, John 5:1, 1 Corinthians. 5:8

### Weekly challenge

Celebrate!

Celebrate God and all He has done for you! Share stories of joy and laughter. Share stories of the difficult times from which God has delivered you, and the release His deliverance has brought. Have a potluck with your Growth Group or other close friends. Sing, laugh, tell stories... Celebrate!

### If you have children...

Take a few moments and celebrate God with them. This week, look for small victories to celebrate – new things learned, and good behavior rewarded. Pray together and thank God for those times!

**Kids’ activities:** Coloring pages and activity sheets (*pick up a few at church*)

