



Class 1, Wednesday, November 15

Main Point: The word ‘holiday’ is short for ‘holy day,’ but American culture ignores the holy. A fear of offending keeps God and Jesus out of the public eye. And since most Americans are only nominally religious, secular traditions are the primary focus. But taking ‘holy’ out of family celebrations removes a great tool for passing on our faith. The family—not the Temple or synagogue—was the central venue of faith to Hebrews and early believers. So ‘holy’ days were the best days to teach the family about their faith.

How can we restore the holidays as a tool for our own and our family’s spiritual growth? That’s the focus of this class.

A Short Summary of Seven Old Testament Celebrations, Feasts, and Holy Days

Passover: A one day reminder of God’s deliverance from slavery and sparing their firstborn children.

Unleavened Bread: A weeklong reminder of the exodus from Egypt.

Firstfruits: A one day celebration of thanksgiving for God’s provision.

Pentecost: A one day celebration of joy over God’s provision.

Trumpets: A one day celebration of a new year showing joy to God.

Day of Atonement: A one day holy day in which sin was forgiven and a relationship with God was restored.

Feast of Tabernacles or Booths: A weeklong reminder of God’s protection and guidance in the wilderness.

All told, that’s 19 days of celebration, mostly done in the family, with a few trips to Jerusalem thrown in!

The “Biggie”

In addition to those 19 days, the Jews celebrated a weekly Sabbath. There was no business, no work, very little cooking, and an emphasis on God, on rest, on worship, and on generosity.

So with 52 Sundays and 19 Holy Days, there were close to 70 days (there was some overlap) dedicated to and focused on God.

Sabbath Teachings. Similar principles applied on Holy Days (Exodus 20 - From the Ten Commandments_

⁹Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁰but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. ¹¹For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. It is a never-ending process with no plateaus. You’re either moving forward or backward. (Exodus 20:9-11)

How Did the Hebrews Use The Holidays?

1. **They f**_____. They emphasized the themes of God’s provision, guidance, protection, and forgiveness. They had food and fun, but stories were told and God was honored.
2. **They i**_____. We could even say that they were designed for children. They asked and answered questions, lit candles, played games, and quoted scripture.
3. **They c**_____. These weren’t mostly “church” or “synagogue” or “Temple” events. Parents accepted the responsibility to conduct and lead the events.

How Can We Use Thanksgiving In Similar Ways?

1. T _____ .
2. H _____ .
3. ? _____ .