



## Learn What to Celebrate (Celebrate Your Design)

December 5, 2021

**Introduction:** I am concerned about the all-out attack on seasons of celebration in the name of showing loyalty to Christ. This year, I have sought to explore how to live and think in this new world. As we close out the year, I want to focus on the importance of the gift of celebration. In scripture, God inspires us to celebrate our design, fruitfulness, authority, and abundance.

### 2021 Sermon Review: How do you live in a new world?

1. Allow yourself to be **trained**
2. Manage your **resources**
3. Manage your **expectations**
4. Know the **truth** (We will be revising this theme)
5. Make good **investments**
6. **Understand** the **God** you love
7. Being **mature** (Grow-up, Part 1)
8. Being **mature** (Grow up, Part 2)
9. **Be confident** and **do the work** (Don't take shortcuts)
10. Make good **decisions**
11. **Change what does not work** (Division doesn't but Unity does)
12. **Learn What To Celebrate (Then do it with wisdom and all of your might)**

### Series Introduction:

#### Four Things You Should Learn To Celebrate (December 2021 Series Summary)

1. **Learn What to Celebrate** (It is ok to be happy)
2. **Learn To Celebrate Your Fruitfulness** (You were designed to be fruitful)
3. **Learn To Celebrate Your Delegated Authority** (You were designed to manage your world)

#### I. Why Some People Struggle to Celebrate the Holidays

##### A. Some believe Christ only wants people to celebrate Him

- The truth is many of the hyperbolic myths we celebrate started with preachers and sincere religious people, Saint Nick or Santa Claus is an example.

##### Note: Paul's Thoughts About Celebrating Various Days and Seasons

- **If we worship God** every day, why would God struggle with a day of gift giving, dancing, and community celebration? He understands that Christmas is not Christ's birthday, it probably was in the Spring. But we have chosen to give Him honorable mention during this season.

### **Paul's Thoughts On Celebrations**

- **Romans 14:5** says, "One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind."

### **B. Some don't understand the origin of some holiday celebrations**

- It was designed to rival a secular holiday celebrating the winter solstice
- The winter solstice is the shortest day and longest night of the year. In the Northern Hemisphere, it takes place between December 20<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>.
- Cultures around the world have long held feasts and celebrated holidays around the winter solstice. Fire and light are traditional symbols of celebrations held on the darkest day of the year.

**Source:** <https://www.history.com/topics/natural-disasters-and-environment/winter-solstice>

- By holding Christmas at the same time as traditional winter solstice festivals, church leaders increased the chances that Christmas would be popularly embraced but gave up the ability to dictate how it was celebrated. By the Middle Ages (*the 5th thru the 15th century*), Christianity had, for the most part, replaced pagan religion. On Christmas, believers attended church, then celebrated raucously in a drunken, carnival-like atmosphere similar to today's Mardi Gras.
- In the early 17th century, a wave of religious reform changed the way Christmas was celebrated in Europe. When Oliver Cromwell and his Puritan forces took over England in 1645, they vowed to rid England of decadence and, as part of their effort, cancelled Christmas. By popular demand, Charles II was restored to the throne and, with him, came the return of the popular holiday.

**Notes on Oliver Cromwell:** <https://www.history.com/topics/british-history/oliver-cromwell>

### **Google Pictures of Oliver Cromwell**

- The pilgrims, English separatists that came to America in 1620, were even more orthodox in their Puritan beliefs than Cromwell. As a result, Christmas was not a holiday in early America. From 1659 to 1681, the celebration of Christmas was actually outlawed in Boston. Anyone exhibiting the Christmas spirit was fined five shillings. By contrast, in the Jamestown settlement, Captain John Smith reported that Christmas was enjoyed by all and passed without incident.

### **C. Some Don't Understand the True Origin of Christmas Traditions Like Santa Claus:**

- The legend of Santa Claus can be traced back to a monk named St. Nicholas who was born in Turkey around 280 A.D. St. Nicholas gave away all of his inherited wealth and traveled the countryside helping the poor and sick, becoming known as the protector of children and sailors.
- **St. Nicholas first entered American popular culture in the late 18th century in New York**, when Dutch families gathered to honor the anniversary of the death of "Sint Nikolaas" (Dutch for Saint Nicholas), or "Sinter Klaas" for short. "Santa Claus" draws his name from this abbreviation.

**D. Some Don't Understand the Origin of Some Holiday Songs Like The Night Before Christmas:**

- In 1822, Episcopal minister Clement Clarke Moore wrote a Christmas poem called "An Account of a Visit from St. Nicholas," more popularly known today by its first line: "'Twas The Night Before Christmas." The poem depicted Santa Claus as a jolly man who flies from home to home on a sled driven by reindeer to deliver toys.

Source: <https://www.history.com/topics/christmas/history-of-christmas>

[Google Pictures Clement Clarke Moore](#)

**II. Unique Design**  
**The Three Benefits of God's Design**

**A. God's Design Keeps Us Close To Him**

- Genesis 1:27 So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.
- Man was designed by God to intellectually engage Him, emotionally feel with Him, and a free-will to determine the boundaries of the relationship they wanted with Him.

**B. God's Design Leads To Fruitfulness (God wanted man to be fruitful and increase in number)**

- 28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it.
- 29 Then God said, "I give you **every** seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and **every** tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. 30 And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—**everything** that has the breath of life in it—I give **every** green plant for food." And it was so.
- 31 God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

**Note:** During the holidays we often showcase our fruitfulness (even if we are pretending to prosper)

**C. God's Design Independently Empower Us (God empowered man to have control)**

- 28 Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

**Note:** We were never designed to be out of control. This is why substance abuse takes away our power and weakens us overtime.



**Conclusion:** Let me close with David's reasons for celebrating his design

### **III. Two Reasons David Celebrated His Design** (Psalm 139:14–17, NIV):

#### **1. He Was Wonderfully Made**

- 14 I praise you because **I am fearfully and wonderfully made**; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. 15 My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.

#### **2. He Was Divinely Watched Over**

- 16 Your eyes saw my unformed body; **all the days ordained for me were written in your book**
- before one of them came to be. 17 How precious to me are your thoughts, God! How vast is the sum of them!

**Next Time:** Celebrating Our Fruitfulness

**Big Question:** How does God feel about you being fruitful? (Fruitful is farming talk for being prosperous)