

Celebrate GOD'S LOVE

by Sheila Lutz



Celebrations! We all love them — birthdays, confirmation day, weddings, a new job, retirement. A funeral is a celebration for the life on earth God gave to His child and especially for the life that He grants His children in heaven. What's been your favorite celebration? Why?

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for celebrations. Thank You for the gifts of love and joy and peace. Thank You for the times I can share these with others. Amen.

Sometimes we forget to celebrate the everyday. Blessings, once received and celebrated, are sometimes forgotten — or no longer seen as special. How many things to celebrate can you find in **1 John 3:1–3**? _____

With whom do you celebrate? Why? _____

Read **1 John 3:4–6**. For whom would you not give a party? A felon? A child abuser? Your neighbor's gay child? The gossip who maligned you or others? The smelly, homeless person? The know-it-all? The man who beat your friend? The "squeaky-wheel" at work who gets the promotion you should have? The drunk who's been to AA more times than you can count? Your ex-best friend who dropped you? Who else? _____

With whom would you have the hardest time celebrating — or who would you not want to forgive? Why? _____

In **1 John 3:7–10**, what is the difference between the one who fails to do right and the one who fails to love? _____

What else does God say about the differences?

Romans 15:1–7 _____

Hebrews 13:1 _____

With whom did Jesus celebrate? What was the reaction of the local leaders?*

Look at **1 John 3:11–15**. Why was Cain's offering evil? _____

Is the offering of a Christian who passes judgment on the alcoholic, abuser, and gossip different from Cain's? _____

When is it right to judge? _____

Why don't the "unlovable" change? _____

How can you love them without agreeing with their lifestyle or point of view? _____

How do you practice "hate the sin, but love the sinner"?

1 Corinthians 5:12–13 _____

James 1:19–27 _____

Read **1 John 3:16–18**. Compare verse 16 with **John 3:16**. _____

How do you celebrate verse 18? _____

How can we celebrate when sin and sorrow visit members of our own family or body? Check the following:

1 Peter 4:12–16 _____

Proverbs 3:5–6 _____

Jeremiah 29:11–13 _____

1 Peter 5:6–7 _____

James 1:12–19 _____

We have reason to celebrate in all times and in all places. When tempted to take time to condemn rather than to celebrate loving others, what should be my first course of action? _____

What other things can I do? _____

What more should I or shouldn't I do? **1 Corinthians 13:1–7** _____

When am I a noisy gong? _____

When do I forget my blessings? _____

I am a forgiven child of the King! How can I share that joy with others? _____

Study **1 Corinthians 4:14–21** (especially verse 21). _____

Count your blessings listed in **1 John 3:19–24**. _____

We Christians are mightily blessed. What are other blessings we can celebrate? See **1 Corinthians 2:10–16**. _____

Philippians 2:1–11 _____

Closing

Pray **Ephesians 3:14–21** and/or sing "Savior, Thy Dying Love" (TLH #403; LW #374) or "Holy Spirit, Light Divine" (LSB #496; LW #166; TLH #234). Note: latter entitled "Holy Ghost, with Light Divine"

*More passages and leader helps are available at lwml.org.

Sheila is the newly elected LWML Central Illinois District President and the Christian Living Editor of the Quarterly. Sheila has been gifted by the Lord with the ability to sing, to dance, and to write and is thankful to the Him for the opportunities she has been given to use and share these gifts.