CHRONIC JOY® DEVOTIONAL

CREATED TO CELEBRATE

By Kara Plett

Happy birthday messages flood in on social media. Maybe you receive a phone call or a card in the mail. Celebrating another year! Birthdays are fun to celebrate, but how often do we look beyond these days of celebration to notice the *everyday* moments around us?

Until recently, I had forgotten that celebration is a spiritual discipline. It's right in there with meditation, fasting, and prayer. In fact, Richard J. Foster culminates his book Celebration of Discipline with a chapter on celebration: "*Celebration is the heart of the way to Christ.*" Celebration brings joy into all the other disciplines.

God knew it was good for us to celebrate. He initiated special days of celebration for His people to stop, to be thankful, to celebrate. Celebration is rooted in our trust in the character of God and our need to thank Him for His goodness. Gratitude is at the core of celebration.

Living life from a place of celebration is living a life of thankfulness, of gratitude. It helps us to see what God is doing around us and in the lives of others. We start to see not only the big moments (graduations, birthdays, retirements) but also the little moments of life that give us reason to celebrate. Celebration becomes part of the regular rhythm of our lives.

Consider some of these:

- The laughter of children
- That steaming cup of tea
- The joy of a friendship
- A text saying, "I'm thinking about you!"
- Holding hands with a loved one
- A sunbeam breaking through the clouds

The more we notice these little moments and stop to celebrate them, the more we see God's goodness and faithfulness everywhere we turn. We can help each other recognize these moments and celebrate what we see God doing in the lives of those around us with a note, a text, or a spoken word. Don't miss the opportunity to speak celebration into the lives of others.

There are so many things to celebrate.

- A baby's first belly laugh
- A first attempt at baking a pie
- A new song learned on the piano
- The 1056th day of friendship
- A baptism or a graduation
- The end of medical treatments
- The start of the school year
- A test passed
- A room cleaned up
- A course completed
- A book written
- A good day at work
- A successful new medication
- The end of the school year

GIVE THE GIFT OF CELEBRATION

Sometimes, we are tempted to withhold celebration. *Don't do it!* When the spirit prompts, give the gift of celebration to someone else. Let them know they are seen by you and by God.

- Send a text saying: "I'm so glad God made you!"
- Write a note with a reminder: "You're in my thoughts, and I wanted to let you know."
- Speak a good word: "I'm so proud of you!"
- Reply on a social media post: "You made it through the week—way to go!"

Remember: *This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it* (Psalm 118:24).

Chronic Joy has a wealth of resources on Celebration. Check out *Celebration Note Starters*. Think of just one person with whom you can share a word of celebration, then jot them a bright note. It will bring a smile to your loved one's face and be a gift to your heart.

PRAYER

Father, thank you for loving us so much that you surround us with reasons to celebrate. Help us to stop and notice these things in our lives and the lives of those around us. As we pause to celebrate, may our gratitude grow and become the rhythm of our hearts, central to all we are and do.

TO PONDER

- What was the last thing you celebrated in your life?
- What have you recently celebrated in the lives of others?
- Prayerfully ask God to whom can you send a note of celebration today. Write that note and drop it in the mail.