

## Celebrate And Be Jazzed!

Recently I came across a great quote that has made quite an impression on me.

**“Each day comes bearing its own gifts. Untie the ribbons.”**  
*Ruth Ann Schabacker*

This statement implies that every day is a gift and that we should celebrate that very fact! Indeed, one sure sign of blossoming spiritual maturity includes having an abiding belief that life is a gift. Imagine with me for a moment that you gave a friend a great jazz recording as a gift. And you couldn't wait to receive a reaction from them. You would want to hear a thank you, but even more than that you would derive much pleasure from hearing them describe their response, their enjoyment listening to the recording, and their appreciation for the gift. After all, their delight was the very reason you gave them the gift in the first place!

Well, here is something to be truly “jazzed” about! The Creator God has given us the precious gift of life and is delighted when he sees us enjoying and celebrating life! Theologian Matthew Fox shares that, **“the gift of life demands a thank you. Our thank you for creation, our fundamental prayer, therefore, is our enjoyment and delight in it!”** God wants us to celebrate life and be jazzed!

Tony Campolo, in his book, “The Kingdom Of God Is A Party” states, **“Our God is a party deity! He loves a party.”** And Mr. Campolo goes on in his book to make an important statement that out of all the people on this planet, those who call themselves Christians should be celebrating!

Jesus, contrary to what you may have been taught, spent much of His time celebrating! So much so, that he was accused of being a “party animal”! Moreover, His parables are filled with parties—a lost coin is found, a lost sheep is located, a lost son returns—they all end with a celebration! Jesus even pictures the Kingdom of God as a huge dinner party where everyone is invited!!! Finding the pearl of great price definitely deserves an appropriate response. The joy of discovery produces festivities that are spontaneous!

Celebration can be defined as a departure from routine existence or any special event designated as significant and worthy of celebration. And I can't think of anything more worthy of celebration than the miracle of existence. The fact that we are here in the first place is enough to let the dancing and celebration begin! A lifestyle of celebration is cultivated by simply responding to the gift of life with joy and thankfulness. We need to rejoice and dance in response to the gift of life!

For most of us the challenge is to keep our hearts and minds focused on celebrating. Author John Burrough, in his book, “Reclaiming a Sense of Wonder”

exclaims, **“The most precious things of life are near at hand, without money and without price. Each of you has the whole wealth of the universe at your very door!”**

Then how come we're not celebrating? How come we're not “jazzed”?

### **1) We take our gifts for granted**

Have you ever noticed that until you get ill you tend to take your health for granted? Until you break a leg you take a simple thing like walking for granted. All of a sudden you begin to have a new appreciation for it! Why is this? It is in part because we have lost our sense of wonder! Novelist and preacher Frederick Buechner penned these incredible words, **“Listen to your life. See it for the fathomless mystery that it is. In the boredom and pain of it no less than in the excitement and gladness: touch, taste, smell your way to the holy and hidden heart of it because in the last analysis all moments are key moments, and life itself is grace.”** So our outlook on life is critical. Losing our sense of wonder and taking things for granted always produces negative results in our lives.

### **2) We fail to cherish our gifts**

Martha Beck pointedly writes, **“I think that the vast majority of us “normal” people spend our lives trashing our treasures and treasuring our trash”**. How is it that the gifts of seeing, hearing, walking, and learning take a back seat to achieving financial success, fame, prestige, and popularity??? I believe that our culture is largely to blame! Advertising media tries to keep us focused on what we don't have and they do a very good job of it! They promise us that we will only be content when we have whatever their selling us!! So we spend most of our time wondering whether we measure up to success and the impossible standards they have set up for us.

### **3) Unhealthy selfish preoccupation**

Let's be candidly honest...many of us live lives of anxious striving, caught up in a “performance” trap, where everything depends on how well we perform. Our sense of well-being is contingent on how well we do or do not measure up. We are just too concerned about our own personal progress and personal identity. Sadly, there is no time to celebrate if we are overly preoccupied with achievement, appearance, and affluence. We can be so busy chasing success that genuine success cannot catch up with us! Our culture has forced us values that have baptized us into the waters of selfishness.

**Consider this...true success is measured by the amount of celebration you have cultivated in your life!** How much time do you spend savoring the

priceless gifts you have been given? How much time is spent rejoicing with the people you love? How much time is spent dancing to the music and rhythm of life? Are you jazzed about life? Remember the source of “being jazzed” comes from a spiritual source.

Begin every day with this question--what am I going to celebrate today? Out of all the great gifts God has given which one am I going to choose to celebrate today? Which ones will I cherish today? Then pick one out and start celebrating. Make a decision to rejoice and be glad for the day the Lord has made! Here is a great prayer...

***"Normal Day, let me be aware of the treasure you are. Let me learn from you, love you, savor you, bless you, before you depart. Let me not pass you by in quest of some rare and perfect tomorrow. Let me hold you while I may, for it will not always be so. (Mary Jean Irion)***

So let the celebration begin and start with a big thank you to God for the banquet He has spread for us. Then start the music, get your feet moving, and be jazzed as you dance to the music and rhythm of life!

I would like to end this article with lyrics from a song I have written recently written.

***It's always a good day...as long as your breathin'  
It's always a good day...as long as your swingin'  
So why not be jazzed, so why not be jazzed about life?  
It's always a good day...as long as your vertical  
It's always a good day...as long as your not to critical  
So why not be jazzed, and show some pizzazz about life?  
Why not be jazzed about life?***

**“This is the day the Lord has made, I will rejoice and be glad in it”**

**Written by David Arivett**

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