



BRIDGES

A Newsletter of New Baptist Church - December 2024



How do you usually feel when Christmas ends?

On December 26th, or perhaps by January 1st or 2nd, what's your typical state of mind? Are you spiritually refreshed, renewed, and encouraged—or do you find yourself burned out, stretched thin, and relieved that it's over? My hope and prayer for you this season is that you experience true refreshment, renewal, and even revival.

This hope comes from a biblical principle that many Christians might not fully understand: God designed sacred seasons to bring rest, reflection, and spiritual renewal. The Holy Days and Feasts in the Old Testament weren't empty rituals; they were divine invitations to recognize God's presence, experience His provision, and celebrate His redemptive work. This principle still applies to us today.

In the Old Testament, God's people celebrated two main seasons: Passover, which commemorated deliverance from bondage, and Atonement, focused on forgiveness of sin. As Christians, we no longer observe these seasons in the same way because they've been fulfilled through Christ. Jesus is our Savior, delivering us from sin and death, and our atoning sacrifice. Therefore, we celebrate Him!

But the principle of sacred seasons remains. In our yearly cycle, Christmas offers us a powerful opportunity for rest, renewal, and revival. During Advent and Christmas, we celebrate the Father's profound love in sending His Son, our Savior, into the world. This season is more than festive lights and gifts—it's an invitation to experience God's presence and reflect on His redemptive work through Christ.

How can you make Christmas a time of true rest and renewal?

- **Carve out moments of silence:** Amid the hustle and bustle, set aside quiet moments to read Scripture, pray, and reflect on the meaning of Christ's coming (consider passages like Luke 2 or John 1:1-14).
- **Practice gratitude:** Make a daily habit of thanking God for His blessings, both big and small, focusing on the gift of Jesus.
- **Embrace simplicity:** Focus on meaningful traditions rather than overwhelming yourself with endless tasks. A simple act of kindness or sharing a meal can embody the spirit of Christ.
- **Worship and Prayer:** Attend our Christmas Eve or Advent services, and take time to meditate on the messages shared.
- **Rest intentionally:** Avoid filling every moment with activity; allow time for physical and spiritual rest to reconnect with God and loved ones.
- **Set healthy boundaries:** Give yourself permission to say no to activities that drain you or distract from the true meaning of Christmas. Prioritize time with God and loved ones.
- **Engage in Christ-centered creativity:** Create or participate in activities like making a nativity scene, writing a heartfelt letter to someone, or singing Christmas hymns. Let creativity draw you closer to Christ.

My prayer for you this Christmas is that, amid the celebrations, you will find true spiritual refreshment, embrace the joy of His presence, and be renewed by the wonder of God's greatest gift: Jesus. May this season be one where you truly experience rest, reflect on His love, and celebrate the hope He brings.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Trent Eastman