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December 17-18, 2005
Let's Restore "Happy Holidays"
Nehemiah 8:13-18

The Israelites were in danger of losing their holiday out of sheer neglect. They were drifting away from God by forgetting His wonderful care for them in the past and reflecting on it in the present. What were they learning from God that we could also learn concerning our holidays?

1. God intends for us to keep "holy days." These are sacred days and need to be set apart. They are days that give history meaning. Some of those days for us are:
 - Advent – Time of waiting before Christmas
 - Christmas – Incarnation of Christ
 - Easter – Resurrection of Christ
 - Pentecost – God sending His Spirit to live in us.
2. God intends for us to enter into "holy days." Four important habits for these days:
 - Rest – stop, so you can see God
 - Relate – days not of solitude but of gathering with others
 - Remember / Reflect – vs. 18 this grounds us and shapes us, gives us context
 - Rejoice – vs. 17 The three previous acts prepare us to turn heavenward and engage with God.

Application Discussion:

1. Share a memory of one of your holidays where God was very present.
2. What do you especially do to make your "holidays" also be "holy days?" (Read the Christmas story; pray; tell stories of how God has been present in your life? What do you do?)
3. Looking at the four important habits listed above, which one do you struggle with the most? In what ways do you struggle?
4. Brainstorm some ideas of how you could enhance your holidays to be more "holy days?"