

“BUT MAY THE
RIGHTEOUS
BE GLAD AND
REJOICE BEFORE
GOD; MAY THEY
BE HAPPY AND
JOYFUL.”

— PSALM 68:3

FROM THE MOUTHS OF OUR CHILDREN

During the Jewish holiday of *Purim*, the main *mitzvahs* (commandments) of the day are to be in a state of complete happiness, hear the reading of the book of Esther, and give to the needy.

During *Adar* (the month leading up to *Purim*) everywhere you walk in Jerusalem there is loud music playing on the street, dancing and singing, and charity being distributed. I never understood why we are commanded to be happy on *Purim*, because happiness has always come naturally to me during this holiday! Yet this year a sobering experience made me realize how hard it can be to stay happy, and how, even during hard times, we must continue to strive to fulfill God’s commandments.

I got up early, excited to begin preparations for the 125 guests we were expecting at our *Purim* meal. Yet when my 11-month-old baby woke up screaming, my excitement faded. Picking him up and feeling his forehead, it was clear that he was very sick and needed a doctor immediately. I took him to the doctor’s office, where he was diagnosed with pneumonia and prescribed a strong antibiotic.

Returning home through Jerusalem streets ringing with songs and celebrations in anticipation of *Purim*, it was impossible for me to get in the spirit of the holiday. As I kissed my child and prayed for his recovery, I was overwhelmed with concern for his health.

When I got home, I gave my sweet son his medicine, put him to bed, and began cooking for our *Purim* celebration. Eventually I broke down crying.



Dancing during Purim (IFCJ)

It was all too much for me. How could I possibly celebrate when I was so worried about my son?

Then my three-year-old daughter came innocently dancing into the kitchen. She took one look at my red puffy eyes and hugged me. “Mommy,” she lovingly whispered, “you shouldn’t cry. God commanded us to be happy today!”

Her words stopped me. She was

right. The commandment to be happy on *Purim* was applicable during good times *and* bad. If we were supposed to be happy only when things were going right, the commandment wouldn’t be needed.

Wiping away the tears, I told my daughter to turn on the music very loud. Together we cooked for our guests while dancing, singing, laughing, and praying. As I forced myself to be happy, I realized that fulfilling God’s will really does make you feel better!

As I look back, my heart fills with gratitude. I am grateful that my son is feeling better, and that my precious daughter, through her simple words, taught me this ultimate truth: No matter how challenging it is sometimes to fulfill God’s commandments, it is always worth doing, since He sent them to us to enhance our lives and to better the world.

GOING DEEPER FOR CHRISTIANS

How does obeying God’s word fill you with joy?

How can you rejoice in all circumstances, during good times and bad?

Read also:

• Philippians 3:1; 4:4

• 1 Thessalonians 5:16