



## Daily Verse and Comment

### Deuteronomy 14:23

(23) And you shall eat before the LORD your God, in the place where He chooses to make His name abide, the tithe of your grain and your new wine and your oil, of the firstborn of your herds and your flocks, that you may learn to fear the LORD your God always.

### Deuteronomy 16:15

(15) Seven days you shall keep a sacred feast to the LORD your God in the place which the LORD chooses, because the LORD your God will bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hands, so that you surely rejoice.

*New King James Version*

The feasts of [God](#) are events that we look forward to with a great deal of positive anticipation. And well we should because they are enjoyable physically and can be tremendously spiritually rewarding. However, experience has shown that, due to spiritual immaturity, there can be a kind of enjoyable dark side to Tabernacles, since it can easily be perceived as a vacation or a "godly" substitute for [Christmas](#).

On the other side of the emotional ledger, there is also a share of trouble preparing for and traveling to them. Tabernacles, especially, can be wearying, and people have sometimes even become quite sick from the stress and consequently had a miserable time. On occasion, the Feast can even be a matrix for motivating family problems.

Overall, though, most of the time we enjoy God's feasts immensely, cherishing the memories we have of the activities, the fine meals, the nice locations, and the time we spent with our spiritual and physical families—things we do not always have either the time or money to do at home.

Yet, we have to be somewhat cautious of this because we can enjoy doing similar kinds of things apart from the Feast—in fact, such experiences apart from the Feast happen frequently. The inherent danger is that, though God wants us to rejoice in keeping His Feast, it is easy to think that, because the Feast is indeed enjoyable, we had a "good" Feast.

Judgment of things like this is highly variable from one person to the next. People can attend the same site, hear the same messages, take part in the same activities, and all have a quite different evaluation of the quality of the Feast. We have all experienced this.

I can look back on one particularly bad Feast—it was not disastrous because no particular "bad" thing occurred—but in my evaluation, the 1974 festival I attended in St. Petersburg, Florida, was an all-time low. The site was not the problem, nor did anybody I attended with give any trouble. It was bad because I did little or nothing positive to make it a great Feast. I was just there soaking up the good times.

[Deuteronomy 14:23](#) and [Deuteronomy 16:15](#) seem to be the verses we turn to most frequently when we refer to the [Feast of Tabernacles](#). However, they primarily emphasize the potential for the enjoyable physical aspects. True, it does say we are to go to learn to fear God, but other scriptures focus more strongly on the spiritual aspects of the Feast, and they are considerable. Though little specific detail is given, there is enough to know that God expects the Feast of Tabernacles to be the year's *spiritual* high-water mark.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

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