

# CHANUKAH GREETINGS

I suppose it is the gifts of Chanukah: the ritual of candle lighting and  
The excitement of the eight day celebration  
That most often make this ancient “Festival of Lights” so important.

Our children, regardless of faith, are always excited about gifts—  
Especially when the gifts are for them.  
It’s often hard for them to resist ripping open the wrappings of their presents...  
And sometimes a real struggle for them to wait their turn.

The larger message of Chanukah is contained in the celebration of certain gifts of G-d...  
Whether such gifts are the regaining of the freedom to worship G-d...  
The replenishment of anointed oil for their Temple lighting...

or

Their efforts to make holy again their beloved Temple that had been  
Desecrated by vulgar morals and profaned by ungodly behavior.  
In matters of faith and holy living each gift is important to godly living...  
The freedom to worship...the various instruments of worship...  
and  
The personal living of the godly life!

Perhaps the biggest temptation we have about such celebration is that we tend  
To think of them as children’s activities...things we adults have already experienced.

Truth be known, we all need to be reminded from time to time  
That G-d does not force us to listen or obey, but calls for us to choose to follow...  
Just as Joshua of old reminded his people...

*“But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you  
then choose you this day whom you will serve...”*

Moreover we adults need to remember that ‘G-d never runs out of love and mercy’...

G-d is always with us...in the valley of the shadows of death...and  
In life’s difficult times...twinkling—if not—as in the glowing lamps of the Temple  
We adults need to be reminded that however polluted our faith becomes by  
A life that no longer is moved by Torah or by the quiet voice of G-d...like the  
Temple ready for rededication, our lives can begin again the journey of faith.

*“O G-d, in these days of Chanukah celebrations, may we rejoice in your gifts—  
For the freedom we have to choose your way...”*

*The reassurance of your presence with us, in twinkling or bold lights...  
For the power to see and feel your presence in life’s dark moments...*

and

*To know that our life and living can be ‘cleaned up’ and we can begin again. Amen”*

*Written by Rev. D. Wayne Martin  
on behalf of*

*The Interfaith Task Force of the CBF of Georgia  
and*

*In the name of the Individuals and Churches of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Georgia  
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