



**Educate  
+ Engage**



REDISCOVERING  
CHRISTMAS



Rediscovering  
Joy

### OVERVIEW

In the hustle and bustle of the Christmas season, it's easy to lose the joy and real meaning of Christmas. If the season feels more overwhelming than joyous, it's time to rediscover what Jesus has for you in this season.

#### **Scripture Passage**

Luke 2:10–11 (NKJV)

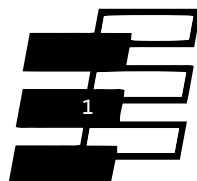
Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."

### EDUCATE

This time of year can be overwhelmingly complex. Usually we focus on the simplistic nature and message of why we celebrate Christmas. We sing about peace on earth. We share good tidings. Yet, it's a season where family stress is higher than any other time of year. It's a season where more people go into debt than at any other time of year. If we're not careful, this season can be filled with loneliness, grief, materialism, and disputes. Mental health struggles and conflict can be the bells ringing the loudest.

We often focus on proclaiming joy to the entire world, but in this lesson we're going to focus on proclaiming joy right here—in our homes and in our church.

(If you would like to set up more context behind the story of Mary and Joseph, feel free to do so!) In the Book of Luke, we learn that Mary found out she was pregnant when an angel appeared to her. The messenger clarified that she shouldn't be afraid because he brought a report of joy that the Messiah would be born (something the Jews had hoped for a long, long time). God planned to use Mary to bring this about, so there was no "Christmas season" yet. Mary and Joseph were just going about regular life.



## There's Joy in Salvation

God's people had waited a long time for the Messiah, hoping and praying for His arrival. They had studied, they had taught their children, and they had seen entire generations pass and new ones enter the world. They knew the Law, but they struggled immensely to follow it. At the time of Jesus' birth, they were under incredible pressure from the Romans. They had a deep desire for deliverance. So, when Mary was given a word that the time had come for the Messiah to bring deliverance, imagine the joy she must have felt!

The whole purpose for Jesus entering the world was to reconcile a fallen world back to Him. A girl named Mary had a baby boy named Jesus to bring redemption to lost souls in desperate need of salvation. That's the reason God was manifest in the flesh and entered the world. There's joy in salvation.

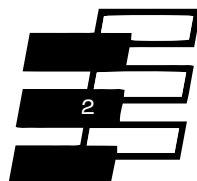
Let's not forget there's still joy in salvation. Imagine for a moment you have a friend who doesn't know Jesus like you do. Now imagine they start learning about Him, and you begin to teach them a Bible study. Now, imagine they come to church, go to the altar, and God fills them with His Spirit. In that moment, you would feel overwhelming joy. *(Talk about a time you led someone to the Lord and the joy you felt and how nothing else compares to that joy—not a new car, a pay increase, and so on.)*

There's joy in salvation because that's the entire reason Jesus offered Himself as a sacrifice. Of course, we will all celebrate this season in different, unique ways. There will be family traditions that will differ from other people's. Aside from all the customs, carols, and whatever food you consider to be the best at Christmas, remember that your salvation was made possible because of the birth of Jesus. Mary and Joseph gave of themselves to raise this boy named Jesus, who eventually gave Himself so we could be free from the chains of sin.

*Discussion Questions: What was it like the first day or night you were born again? How do you keep that joy in your heart?*

## There's Joy in Giving

If you've ever had a really good gift idea for someone that you *knew* they would love, you know the anticipation to see them opening the gift is always better than opening a gift of your own. *(Tell a story of a time you were excited to give someone a gift and the joy you felt).*



## Lesson 1

Obviously we all know that this time of year can have an unfortunate focus on acquiring and accumulating, but true joy results from giving. Acts 20:35 reminds us that it is indeed more blessed to give than to receive. This isn't just an opinion; it's a profound truth. When we give, we reflect the true character of Jesus, the ultimate giver.

John 3:16 reminds us that God so loved the world that he gave. Giving to others doesn't just produce joy, it produces a deep connection with others. When we truly find joy in Jesus being the reason for the celebrations, we can find joy in knowing He didn't just give Himself for me, but also for others around me. We can also find joy in giving of ourselves (our time, our talent, our treasure) to others.

*Discussion Question: What could you give to others to bring them joy?*

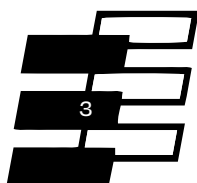
### **There's Joy in Celebrating Others**

Celebrating others also brings tremendous joy. Proverbs 11:25 teaches: "The generous soul will be made rich, and he who waters will also be watered himself." Have you ever seen a toddler who seemingly couldn't understand celebrating someone else's birthday and wanted to be the one to blow out the candles and open the presents? It's always a comical sight, and depending on how the situation is handled, can also lead to frustration.

In this season, have you noticed we can act like toddlers, making someone else's birthday celebration about us? The older we get, the more we start to recognize someone else's birthday isn't our time to blow out the candles or open presents. In fact, the more we grow in a relationship with a friend, the more we enjoy celebrating them. The closer we get to someone, the less threatened we are by them and the more we truly enjoy lifting them up. *(Talk about a friend you have and an example of how you enjoy celebrating them.)*

The more we grow in our relationship with Jesus, the more we should love celebrating Him. If the Christmas season is only about what you can receive, or if you think it's boring or old-fashioned to truly celebrate Jesus, it's possible your relationship with Him isn't as close as you think.

*Discussion Questions: During the month of December, do you take time to just sit down and read about the birth of Jesus? Do you reflect on the joy of Jesus' birth, or is it all about the decorations, presents you get, and the traditions your family has?*



### Closing

When we truly rediscover the joy in this time of year, we will quickly recognize it really is all about Jesus. If this season feels more chaotic than joyous, it's time to remember who it's all about. The fact that Jesus sacrificed Himself to save us should bring an immense amount of joy. The joy of salvation should help us to reflect on the ultimate price Jesus paid so we could walk in freedom. That rediscovery should also realign our hearts to be focused on others.

### ENGAGE

Take time to pray and ask God to realign your heart with His. Over the course of this next week, take inventory. Do you have joy? Where is the source of your joy? Have you experienced the joy of showing others who Jesus really is? What can you do this week to give to someone else? How can you celebrate others around you?

