



Celebrating Joy

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE CHRISTMAS TRADITION?

The POINT >

We can experience great joy because Jesus saves.

> PSALM 95:1-3

¹ Come, let's shout joyfully to the LORD, shout triumphantly to the rock of our salvation!

² Let's enter his presence with thanksgiving; let's shout triumphantly to him in song.

³ For the LORD is a great God, a great King above all gods.

> LUKE 2:4-14

⁴ Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family line of David, ⁵ to be registered along with Mary, who was engaged to him and was pregnant. ⁶ While they

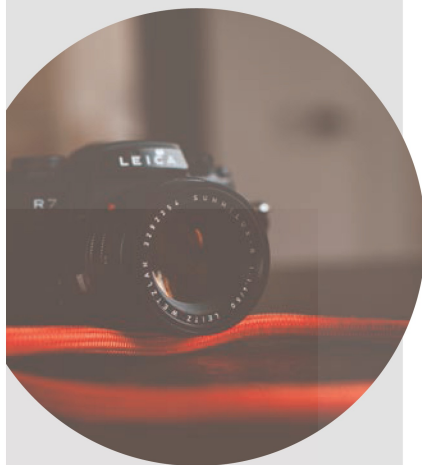
were there, the time came for her to give birth. ⁷ Then she gave birth to her firstborn son, and she wrapped him tightly in cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them. ⁸ In the same region, shepherds were staying out in the fields and keeping watch at night over their flock. ⁹ Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Don't be afraid, for look, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people: ¹¹ Today in the city of David a Savior was born for you, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be the sign for you: You will find a baby wrapped tightly in cloth and lying in a manger." ¹³ Suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying: ¹⁴ Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to people he favors!



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

FACT:

The Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates that in the US, 15,000 people visit hospital emergency rooms each Christmas season from holiday-related decorating accidents.¹ So please, be careful when you're decking the halls.



LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING // PEOPLE

Because of Jesus, people can live with joy regardless of circumstances, as joy is rooted in an eternal perspective and not in earthly circumstances.

The Christmas season is evident in so many ways: trees and lights, gifts and wrapping paper, choirs and carols. Alongside these cherished old traditions have come new ones like non-stop Hallmark® movies and, one of my favorites, the ugly Christmas sweater.

So many of us relish these annual traditions because they remind us of our childhood. Christmas is also a reason for long-distance families to gather together, and we find joy in these moments.

Our joy should not be tied to the traditions and cultural expressions of Christmas. When the family goes home, we take down the decorations, and grow tired of the gifts, we often put away our joy, too. Our true joy should rise out of the reason and purpose behind Christmas, a purpose often lost in the busyness of the season. We can embrace joy year-round—even when life is difficult. This kind of joy is found only in Christ.

PSALM 95:1-3

1 What has recently led you to praise God?

2 How can you show joy and give thanks to God?

LUKE 2:4-7

3 What is your favorite part of the story of Christmas?

4 How did the birth of Jesus bring salvation to us?

5 How would you explain the “good news” of Jesus’ birth to someone else?

LUKE 2:8-14

6 What about Jesus’ birth gives people joy?

7 How has your life changed because of Jesus’ birth?

8 Why is it important to share your joy in Jesus with others?



*The good news
proclaiming the
birth of the Savior
was delivered to
ordinary people—
the shepherds.
#BSFLEmotions*





LIVE IT OUT

LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING // PEOPLE

Because of Jesus, people can live with joy regardless of circumstances, as joy is rooted in an eternal perspective and not in earthly circumstances.

In this life, we will face difficult circumstances. Mary endured the shame of pregnancy outside marriage. The disciples suffered the death of their Teacher. Yet these were temporary, and the victory and blessings on the other side of these experiences made the suffering worth it. We can have joy, even in difficult times, when we focus on the things that await God's people in eternity.

› CHRIST

Joy refers specifically to our being satisfied or happy, not based on the things that happen in this life, but because we are eternally secure in Christ.

9 When you honestly evaluate your life, do you find more joy in earthly things or in Jesus? Why did you answer this way?

10 What steps will you take to grow in finding joy in Christ?

GOD

JESUS

HOLY SPIRIT

BIBLE

SALVATION

CREATION

CHURCH

PEOPLE

FAMILY

COMMUNITY
& WORLD

> COMMUNITY

Read John 15:9-12.

11 What is the relationship between joy and showing love to your Christian brothers and sisters?



12 How will you help someone else experience this kind of joy this week?

> CULTURE

13 Make it a point to give a small and meaningful gift to one or more of your friends who aren't believers and share the gospel with them. As kind as it is to give earthly gifts, the greatest gift we can give someone this Christmas is the good news of Jesus. Tell them all about the joy you experience because of Christ.