

WEEK<sub>3</sub>  
HE IS JOY

HE IS

## SCRIPTURE

*Open your Bible and read today's verses with your family.*

• Luke 1:30-33

"And the angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.'"

• Luke 2:8-10

"And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, 'Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.'"

Psalm 16:8-11

"I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure. For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption. You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore."

## CONTENT

*Read today's devotion aloud with your family, small group, or simply during your personal time with the Lord.*

The focus this week is on joy. Yet, for many, the difficult circumstances of life can leave Christmas feeling anything but joyful. Who can think of carols, twinkling lights, or wrapping paper in the midst of job loss, a broken marriage, or the devastating ache of missing a loved one who has died? Who can be merry and bright in the face of strained family relationships, the wearying toll of sickness and disease, or the deafening quiet of ongoing loneliness?

The world tells us that joy is attached to our circumstances. Even as believers who know our hope lies in Christ alone, our hearts can certainly long for the perfection we were created for at the beginning yet lost when sin came along. We have to remind ourselves that true, deep, lasting joy, no matter what we are facing right now, will only be possible when Jesus is the source of our joy.

In Luke 2:10, we read the angelic declaration of Christ's arrival to the shepherds, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people." Even though this original announcement came over 2,000 years ago, it still offers great joy to us today.

There is JOY in the knowledge that God did not decide He was done with us when sin entered the world. He pursued us and sent us His Son!

There is JOY in the knowledge that Jesus took on human flesh. He knew what He would have to endure to save us. He knew the full depth of our sin. And He came and died anyway!

There is JOY in the knowledge that Christ's sacrifice was enough. In Him, we are fully forgiven and made clean!

There is JOY in knowing He is victorious and His reign is unending. One day, He will wipe every tear from our eyes and set all things right!

Difficult days will come and even linger, but leaning into the joy we have in Jesus is an act of defiance in the face of deep darkness. Merriam-Webster's Dictionary defines joy as "an emotion evoked by well-being" or "a source of delight." Considering these words, joy for a believer can become a deep well within us that nothing can touch. It is the ability to say, "It is well with my soul because I have all that I need in Jesus. He is the source of my well-being. In Him I find my delight." Joy is not glitzy and glittery. It is not the absence of all sorrow, the holding back of tears, or the denial of pain. Joy is an undercurrent of sure and steady hope that helps us endure. Joy is the gladness of heart we have in Jesus - the light that breaks through the darkness, our hope when all hope seems lost.

No matter how much pain and heartbreak may come our way, no matter how much doubt and fear we may experience, no matter how hard Satan fights against us or tries to tempt us, NOTHING can undo what our Savior has done. It is finished! Christ has already come. He was born of a virgin, died a criminal's death though He knew no sin, and rose again from the grave. He has redeemed us by His blood, He now sits enthroned forever in majesty, and His Spirit resides inside every believer. And this promise-keeping Savior has promised He will return. These truths will never change. They are lasting peace for us. They are eternal hope and unquenchable JOY.

May we all sincerely slow down and spend time with Him this week, finding fullness of joy in His presence. Joy to the world, the Lord has come. Joy to our hearts, nothing can undo what our Savior has done.

## CONVERSATION STARTERS

*Use these questions to start conversation with your family, small group, or simply to further your own understanding and application of today's scripture and devotion*

1. What are some things in your life that try to steal your joy? How can you slow down to focus on the unchanging and never ending joy of the Lord when those situations and circumstances come?
2. Why should Christians' lives be characterized by joy? What are some examples of how joy shows itself in your life?
3. How could living in a way that shows the joy of the Lord day in and day out impact your home? Your workplace? Your school? Your team? Our culture?

## CONNECTIONS

*Use the following activities and ideas throughout the coming week to further connect the lessons from today's scripture and devotion as well as deepen connections with family, friends, and community.*

1. Begin a gratitude jar or joy jar to keep during the Christmas season. Cut small strips of paper to keep next to the jar with a pen. Each day, write down (or have a parent write, or younger children can draw) something that you are thankful for and/or that brings you joy. Take time each day as you eat together or each week during this devotion time to read some of these with your family.
2. Create a joy playlist! We all have times where we need to be reminded of joy! Find music that is uplifting and reminds you of the joy you can have in the Lord! You can do this as individuals or even make a playlist together as a family or with friends!
3. Take a 15-minute walk this week, being mindful of God's creation and His gifts to you. Let even the little things you see and experience be sources of joy!
4. Tell at least one person this week the reason for the hope and joy you have in your life.

## MEMORY VERSE

*Use the memory verse to lock in the Biblical truth of today's lesson throughout the week.*

### **Luke 2:10**

And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people."

*Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news  
of great joy that will be for all the people.*

Luke 2:10

