



An **EMOTIONAL**
Christmas



A Joyful
CHRISTMAS

Week 3
Devotional №1

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! – Philippians 4:4

A few years ago, a woman named Marie Kondo gained a massive level of popularity and notoriety (for a moment) by teaching others how to declutter and organize their homes. A main tactic she used for this was encouraging her viewers to figure out what ‘sparks joy’ in their lives. If it sparks joy, it stays. If it doesn’t spark joy, it gets tossed. Simple strategy.

Now the question is, what ‘sparks joy’ in you? If you are like most of us, Christmas is on your list. Presents, lights, hot cocoa, Buddy the Elf! Christmas is one of the most festive times of the year. Naturally, the Christmas season brings with it warm feelings of happiness and excitement. It brings back memories of time with families or loved ones, gifts from years past, and sugar cookies left out for Santa. There’s an almost mystical quality about Christmas time and everything involved in it.

But here’s the thing: ‘The joy of Christmas’ isn’t true joy. Because when all is said and done, the Christmas season ends. Wrapping paper is thrown away and eventually, some of the presents are tossed too. Gingerbread houses get eaten (or they became really stale). New Year’s comes and goes, and Christmas gets put in the back of our minds and forgotten about until next October. Christmas, as the world celebrates it, ends.

Real joy lasts. You see, when we are truly joyful as Scripture calls us to be, it’s not circumstantial. It doesn’t come and go with the highs and the lows of the season. Joy is steadfast, it’s changeless, it’s forever. The ‘joy of Christmas’ that the world experiences and the joy of Christmas that we experience as Christians are not the same.

Philippians 4:4 is a fantastic mantra for how to live as believers. We have the ultimate gift given to us in Christ, so we should rejoice! However, when we look closer at the context of that verse, we see Paul's situation. He was in prison when he wrote this. He is telling us to rejoice regardless of the circumstances or the situation surrounding us. Paul understood that true joy extends beyond what's right in front of us.

The joy that God offers is endless, eternal, perfect, and good. As believers, we can be joyful at Christmas and throughout the whole year because Jesus Christ came to earth! Though we didn't deserve it (and in fact, we deserve quite the opposite), Jesus gives us life! We don't need Marie Kondo to tell us where to find joy. We know that true joy comes solely from our Creator and knowing what He has done for us. So, rejoice in the Lord this Christmas season. I will say it again: Rejoice!

DISCUSS

- What are some earthly things you can find joy in?
- Read Psalm 16. Based on verses 9-11, why can we have joy in God?
- This Christmas season, how can you shift from having earthly joy to having true godly joy?

PRAYER AND PRAISE

- Pray that God would be working in your heart to instill true joy instead of earthly joy.
- Pray that you can rally with your Christian community to instill joy in your circles of influence this Christmas.