

Family Advent Celebration

Week Three

Before you read this evening's Advent devotional, relight the "Hope" and "Love" candles. Ask your family if they can tell you the name of each candle and what they remember about the past weeks' devotions.

JOY

Joy: A positive attitude or pleasant emotion; delight.

"The angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.'"

Luke 2:10

Despite singing about it at this Christmas season . . . "Joy to the world, the Lord is come" . . . "Tidings of comfort and joy" . . . often we forget the meaning of the joy of the season. We get so bogged down in lists and shopping and decorating and baking and parties and rehearsals and. . . and . . . and . . . that we forget to find joy.

And, even more, sometimes as Christ-followers we forget what the joy of Christ really means. It was "joy" that was born in a stable in Bethlehem nearly two thousand years ago.

The joy of Christ isn't a life of ease and perfection. In fact, the writer to the Hebrews reminds us,

"Let us keep looking to Jesus. Our faith comes from Him and He is the One Who makes it perfect. He did not give up when He had to suffer shame and die on a cross. He knew of the joy that would be His later. Now He is sitting at the right side of God."

Hebrews 12:2 (NLV)

So *Joy to the world, the Lord is come* is also the joy of the cross. It is the joy of the runner who has completed a race, yet suffered hardship. It is the joy of investing at great cost, with an eternal reward. It is the joy of being a new creation in Christ. It is the joy of the crucifixion and resurrection and ascension of Christ.

James wrote,

"Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance."

James 1:2-3

In The Message translation it reads like this:

Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow.

Somehow we rarely seek joy in trials or trouble. Yet, it is through this process that we discover the strength and support of Jesus. And, through that we find real joy. So, the joy of this season is the gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ.

This Christmas, focus on the joy of the manger, the cross, the empty tomb, and the risen Savior. In that is the true meaning of Christmas.

Have a family member light the candle of "Joy" and close in prayer

[Family Advent Celebration Week 4](#)