

Preparing for Bethlehem

Series: "The Journey to Bethlehem," Part 4 of 5

Luke 1:39-45

Quiz: What is the Most Popular Game System in the USA?

- ___ Play Station 3?
- ___ Wii?
- ___ Xbox 360?

Let's Talk about Joy!

We prepare most effectively for the birth of Christ by learning the secret of choosing _____ over _____.

Happiness	Joy
i _____	long-term
easier	harder
surface	d _____
transient	constant
circumstances	g _____ from God
self-focused	o _____ -focused

THREE WAYS TO EXPERIENCE BIBLICAL JOY

1. R _____ Specific Ways that God is _____ in Our Lives

(Luke 1:39-42 NIV) *At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, {40} where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. {41} When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. {42} In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear!*

(Luke 1:15 NIV) *and [John] will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth.*

2. R _____ the Pattern that Joy is Usually Accompanied by _____.

Challenges for Mary:

Acceptance of the angelic proclamation meant certain persecution for Mary. Suspected of adultery under Jewish law, she would have been a social outcast in her village. She may have immediately assumed that her positive response to Gabriel's announcement would result in divorce with Joseph. This would not only bring her public shame, but to her parents and other family members as well. There would also be comments by the children as Jews grew up. . . Would her son be considered a "bastard"? Would this reputation follow Jesus throughout his life? Perhaps this stigma was in the mind of some when the retorted to Jesus: "We were not born of fornication; we have on Father, even God" (John 8:41).

—Exploring Bible Times, Dr. Jim Martin

These are they that are to be stoned . . . he that has connection with a girl that is betrothed (Mishnah: Sanhedrin 7:4a).

Challenges for Joseph: *The angelical announcement. . . apparently provided Joseph with the courage to take Mary as his wife, even though it may well have resulted in social persecution.*

—Exploring Bible Times, Dr. Jim Martin

3. R _____ Your Life to _____ Joy More Regularly

(Luke 1:43-45 NIV) *But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? {44} As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. {45} Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished!"*

I Will Sing for Joy!
