

Day 4

*Joy*

**Silence (2 minutes)** Take some time to be quiet, to calm down, and to listen. What has God been teaching you? What are the next steps He wants you to take? How is your spirit doing?

**Scripture** *"And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is the Messiah, the Lord.'"* Luke 2:8-11

**Discussion** The news which causes great joy is the arrival of a Savior, the Messiah, the Lord. The shepherds probably wouldn't have understood why the angel appeared to them, but they would have been astounded. They may have mistakenly thought the Savior, Messiah, and Lord was arriving to rescue them politically from Rome. They probably weren't sure what it all meant, but they understood that this was God, the Lord, acting, coming, entering their lives, and that it was for their good. God acting in their lives, and ours, certainly is a great joy. We were created to need a relationship with the Lord. We sinned and needed a Savior. We needed a Messiah who would come to His people and send them to tell the world about Him. From our position in history, we know about Jesus' birth, death, and resurrection. We have the New Testament and centuries of Christian writings. We are blessed with a much clearer understanding that Jesus is the promised Jewish Messiah, that He saves us from our sin and separation, and He is the Lord, the One True God. *"Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."* (Php. 2:9-11) God acting in our lives as Messiah, Savior, and Lord is great joy. We probably understand much more than the shepherds did, but there is still a lot of mystery for us. Complete understanding isn't necessary. God is acting in our lives for our good, because He loves us. That is a great joy.

**Application** Take a moment and think about the truth of God taking on the form of humanity in Jesus. Consider how beautiful it is that our creator did not abandon us to our sin but instead personally paid our debt by becoming like us 2,000 years ago. Pick two more times today to quietly ponder this truth today as an act of worship to God for the joy He has given us in Christ Jesus!

**Prayer** Father, I praise You for Your wisdom in arranging history so that Jesus, the Messiah, came at just the right time. I thank You for the joy You gave the shepherds and others who met and believed in the Messiah. Thank You for the joy I have of You reaching out to me, to rescue me so that I can know You and belong to You. Knowing You is joy. Amen.

**Silence (2 minutes)** Talk to God about what you are learning. What are your fears? Where are your hangups? Pray for direction.

**Scripture memory** for the week: *"For the joy set before Him He endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart."* Hebrews 12:2b-3