

How You Can Rediscover the Daily Joy of Jesus This Christmas

I love it all! I love everything about this miraculous, melodic, much-anticipated season of the year.

I love the cards that arrive daily, flooding my mailbox with heartfelt greetings from friends and family from long ago and far away.

I love the calorie-laden goodies and the family recipes that have been passed down from generation to generation. I love knowing that when I make the fresh cranberry jello in preparation for Christmas dinner, I am holding the same recipe card in my hands that my grandmother held in her hands over 50 years ago.

I love the smell of Christmas! My heart melts at the fragrances of the evergreen, peppermint and cinnamon that flood my home from the days before Thanksgiving right through New Year's Day.

I love giving gifts to those I know the best and love the most. Even I, a woman who thinks that shopping is a waste of time, can't wait to hear the delight in my children's and grandchildren's voices on Christmas morning.

I love the childlike wonder that wraps itself around even the cynical world of entertainment.

I love the music ... Oh, how I love the music of Christmas. Even now, I could weep thinking about the lyrics of the songs that are particular only to Christmas.

"Mary, did you know/ That your baby boy/ Has walked where angels trod?/ When you kiss your little baby/ You kissed the

face of God!"

"Immanuel/ Our God is with us/ And if God is with us/ Who could stand against us?/ Our God is with us, Immanuel!"

"I will hold you in the beginning/ You will hold me in the end/ Every moment in the middle/ Make my heart Your Bethlehem/ Be born in me!"

"Word of the Father/ Now in flesh appearing/ O come let us adore Him/ Christ the Lord!"

But what I love the most about Christmas is the story itself. I am breathless and humbled with the realization that, like Mary, I have been chosen to carry the Christ-child to my lonely world.

I am in awe and wonder, with the shepherds, that the joy of heaven would explode into the darkness of planet earth.

I am humbly joining in the worship with the Magi as I am invited to bow before the infant King.

The first recorded words of God in the Bible are very familiar to most of us. "Let there be light!" (Gen. 1:3) was the declaration of the Creator God as he obliterated the darkness and void of the world pre-creation. His vibrant and powerful words washed away the dominion of darkness and He became the eternal light of the world!

Thousands of years later, when Jesus came to restore what sin had stolen from creation, the angels made a declaration on behalf of the King of heaven. Into the darkness of sin and shame, an angelic chorus heralded the news that delivered Jesus to earth:

"Listen! Do not fear. For I bring you good news of great joy, which will be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the City of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:10-11).

When heaven announced the presence of Jesus into the battle-scarred world over Bethlehem, they sang, "Let there be *joy!*"

My prayer for you this Christmas season is that you would rediscover the joy that belongs uniquely to Christmas. I pray that you would hear the song of the angels in your dark world and that you would join in the chorus that humanity has sung for hundreds of years. Don't allow the trappings of this time of year deny you of the dynamic and eternal song of Christmas.

A Savior has come and He has brought with Him heaven's joy!
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Carol McLeod *is an author and popular speaker at women's conferences and retreats, where she teaches the Word of God with great joy and enthusiasm. Carol encourages and empowers women with passionate and practical biblical messages mixed with her own special brand of hope and humor. She has written five books: No More Ordinary, Holy Estrogen!, The Rooms of a Woman's Heart, Defiant Joy! and Refined: Finding Joy in the Midst of the Fire. Her teaching DVD The Rooms of a Woman's Heart won the Telly Award, a prestigious industry award for excellence in religious programming.*