



Got Joy? Devotion

And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:9–11).

Shopping, holiday parties, decorating, writing Christmas cards, rushing from place to place, fighting the crowds — where is the joy? The Christmas season is when the stress level is usually the highest, time is never enough, and emotions run high. I have discovered over the years that most people fall into two categories during this time — those who **love** the Christmas season and those who **hate** it. Which are you? Got joy?

This past Christmas was the first one I faced without my father. He had passed away two months earlier after many years of declining health. Many of my friends worried that I would not find joy in this holiday season. While it is true that I missed his presence terribly, waking up on Christmas morning, knowing that Daddy was spending Christmas with His Savior, face to face, brought me one of the greatest joys I have ever known. My dad spent his entire life dedicated to his faith. Did it bring him joy? I think so, but more importantly it brought him closer in his relationship to his Savior and ultimately the joy of eternal life when he passed from this world. For many weeks after his funeral, friends, family, and coworkers commented on how my family expressed joy during our loss. Yes, joy! Joy that Daddy was with His Savior, where he had always longed to be. Throughout that season, if I had been asked the question, "Got joy?" I could have honestly answered, "Yes!"

What is your greatest joy? Scoring the best Christmas gift? Getting through the holidays with everything going as planned? Having your family and friends together for a special gathering? I would suggest, as Christians, our greatest joy is a baby born in a stable over 2,000 years ago to save God's people from their sins and bring the gift of salvation to those who trust Him.

In a field, to shepherds who were terrified, the angel brought good news that would cause great joy for **all** the people — not just a few, not just some special ones, but **all** people. Jesus, the Messiah, was born in Bethlehem for everyone. Jesus IS joy! God's promise to save the world from sin is fulfilled. He sent His Son to be the Savior of the world. What more joyous news could there be? So, take a break from the hustle and bustle of the season and every other day of the year, and celebrate the joy that is Jesus!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, we come to You at this time of year when the focus should be on the joy of Your Son Jesus and His arrival to save us from our sins. We often are caught up in the festivities of the season and give in to stress and struggles. Help us to keep our eyes on the true Joy of Christmas and celebrate the birth of Your Son. Be with those who are experiencing sickness and sadness and share Your joy of healing with them. Keep those who are away from their families in Your care. Encourage us to share the *good news of great joy* with those around us not only throughout this season, but all year long. Help us to answer "Yes!" when asked the question "Got joy?" and know that the joy is Jesus! In Your precious name. Amen.

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