

# The Choices That Create Joy in Your Life

**December 8, 2024**

“JOY” is mentioned 8 times in the Christmas story

## **HAPPINESS**

based on what “happens”  
my external circumstances  
temporary

## **JOY**

based on my choices  
my internal character  
long-lasting

**JOY is:** “the settled assurance that God is in control of every detail in my life, the quiet confidence that ultimately everything will be all right, and the determined choice to praise God in all things.”

## **3 CHOICES THAT WILL RESTORE YOUR JOY**

### **1<sup>st</sup> DESTROYER OF Joy: ANXIETY**

#### **1. When Mary was AFRAID she chose to TRUST God and ACCEPT His plan.**

*“In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, to a young virgin girl named Mary. At that time Mary was legally engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David. Suddenly, the angel appeared to Mary and said, ‘Greetings, highly favored woman! The Lord is with you!’ Frightened and disturbed by this, Mary wondered what the angel could possibly mean. ‘Don’t be afraid, Mary!’ the angel told her, ‘You have been chosen by God for his purpose.’” Luke 1:26-30*

*“The angel continued, ‘You will become pregnant and have a son, and you are to name him Jesus. Your child will be the greatest, the Son of the Most High God! He will sit on David’s throne as King forever, and his Kingdom will never end!’” Luke 1:31-33*

*“Then Mary asked, ‘But how is this possible? I have never slept with a man!’ The angel replied, ‘God’s Holy Spirit, and his creative power, will overshadow you. So your baby will be the Holy Son of God. It will be a miracle, just as your relative Elizabeth has become pregnant in her old age! For nothing is impossible with God!’” Luke 1:34-37*

*“Mary responded, ‘I am the Lord’s servant, and I am WILLING TO ACCEPT WHATEVER HE WANTS. May everything you have said come true.’ And then the angel left her.” Luke 1:38*

*Mary: “My spirit finds its JOY IN GOD, my Savior!” Luke 1:47 (GW)*

## 2<sup>nd</sup> DESTROYER OF Joy: **RESENTMENT** over a hurt.

### 2. When Joseph was **HURT** he chose to offer **GRACE** and **LET IT GO.**

*“This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was legally betrothed to be married to Joseph, but while she was still a virgin and they had not come together, she became pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Now Joseph was a godly man who always did what was right, and he did not want to shame Mary or expose her to public disgrace, so he planned to quietly call off the wedding.” Matthew 1:18-19*

*“After deciding this, an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, ‘Joseph, the baby that Mary is carrying really is from the Holy Spirit! So, go ahead and marry her, and, when the baby is born, name him Jesus, because he will save people from their sins.”  
Matthew 1:20-21*

*“. . . The JOY of the Lord will be your strength!” Nehemiah 8:10 (NIV)*

## 3<sup>rd</sup> DESTROYER OF Joy: **CONFUSION**

### 3. When the Wise Men were **CONFUSED** they chose to **FOLLOW** God’s light **ONE STEP** at a time.

*“After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, some wise men from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, ‘Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and we have followed it here, seeking to find and worship him.’ Now Herod was deeply upset and bothered by their search, and so was most of Jerusalem as well!” Matthew 2:1-3*

*“Then King Herod sent them to Bethlehem with these instructions, ‘Go and diligently search to find this the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I may go worship him too.’” Matthew 2:8*

*“So they continued their search, following the star they had seen in the east. It went ahead of them until it stopped exactly over the place where the child was. When the wise men saw where the star stopped, they were FILLED WITH JOY, and REJOICED EXCEEDINGLY!” Matthew 2:9-10*

*“They entered the place and saw the child with his mother Mary. Overwhelmed, they fell to their knees and worshiped Jesus. Then they opened their treasure boxes and gave Jesus their gifts of gold and incense and myrrh.” Matthew 2:11*

*“Lord, restore to me the JOY of your salvation. . .” Psalm 51:12*