



EXPECT TO FIND JOY THIS CHRISTMAS

Matthew 2:1-12

- *“When they (the Magi) saw the star, they were filled with joy!”* (Matthew 2:10)
- **What would it take to make you really happy this Christmas?**
- Sometimes we allow circumstances, envy, people, things or worry to steal our happiness.
- **Happiness** depends on circumstances, while **joy** is a deeper emotion that is not dependent on outer circumstances in life.
- We need to have joy in order to: 1) live an “enjoyable life”, 2) be good witnesses for Jesus, and 3) survive life’s struggles (Nehemiah 8:10).
- **Jesus wants to enable us to live joy-filled lives even during trying times.**
- Jesus - *“I have told you these things so that you will be filled with My joy. Yes, your joy will overflow!”* (John 15:11)
- **The story of the Magi (Wise Men) is a story about how pursuing the Lord can bring joy to our lives.**
- *“When they saw the star, they were filled with joy! They entered the house and saw the child with His mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped Him.”* (Matthew 2:10-11)
- **What are some steps I can take to experience more joy this Christmas season?**

To Experience Joy This Christmas Season:

WE SHOULD FOCUS ON PURSUING THE LORD

- There is a renewed search for spirituality and the meaning of life in today’s world, but most people aren’t pursuing the Lord like the Magi were doing.
- **“Pursuing the Lord” involves seeking to connect with Him regularly through worship, prayer, Bible reading and engagement with other Christians.**
- *“Seek the Lord while you can find Him. Call on Him now while He is near.”* (Isaiah 55:6)

We Are Reminded From The Story Of The Magi That:

- **GOD PROVIDES DIRECTION FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE SEEKING THE LORD**

- The Wise Men - *“We have seen His star as it arose, and we have come to worship Him.”* (Matthew 2:2)
- **The Lord speaks to People through: 1) His Word (Psalm 119:103-105), 2) His Spirit (Acts 13:2), 3) His People (Proverbs 15:22), 5) Dreams and Visions (Joel 2:28), 6) Circumstances (Revelation 3:7) and 7) Signs.**
- **The Lord does whatever is needed to communicate with human beings.**
- *“From the time the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky and all that God made. They can clearly see His invisible qualities – His eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuses whatsoever for not knowing God.”* (Romans 1:20)
- **WE CAN EXPECT OPPOSITION WHILE SEEKING THE LORD**
 - *“King Herod was deeply disturbed when he heard this, as was everyone in Jerusalem. He called a meeting of the leading priests and teachers of religious law and asked, ‘Where is the Messiah supposed to be born?’ ‘In Bethlehem in Judea,’ they said, ‘for this is what the prophet wrote: And you, O Bethlehem in the land of Judah, are not least among the ruling cities of Judah, for a ruler will come from you who will be the shepherd for My people Israel.’ Then Herod called for a private meeting with the wise men, and he learned from them the time when the star first appeared. Then he told them, ‘Go to Bethlehem and search carefully for the child. And when you find Him, come back and tell me so that I can go and worship Him, too!’”* (Matthew 2:3-8)
 - **It was King Herod’s plan to destroy the child who was to become the Jewish Messiah (Matthew 2:13-18).**
 - **The Magi’s visit reminds us that: 1) The Scriptures should lead us to Jesus (John 20:31), 2) We shouldn’t trust everyone who proclaims they worship Jesus, and 3) Some people (like the Jewish Priests) know about Jesus in their minds, but not in their hearts.**
 - *“When it was time to leave, they (the Wise Men) returned to their own country by another route, for God had warned them in a dream not to return to Herod.”* (Matthew 2:12)
- **We need to decide if we’re going to be seeking Jesus (like the Magi), opposing Jesus (like King Herod), or ignoring Jesus (like the Jewish Priests).**

To Experience Joy This Christmas Season:

WE SHOULD FOCUS ON ENCOUNTERING THE LORD

- *“The wise men went their way. And the star they had seen in the east guided them to Bethlehem. It went ahead of them and stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were filled with joy! They entered the house and saw the child with His mother...”* (Matthew 2:9-11)
- **We initially encounter Jesus in our day when we recognize our need for Him, repent of our sins, and put our faith and trust in Him.**
- **When we encounter Jesus, He forgives our sins and His Spirit comes into our lives, bringing help, healing and happiness to our lives.**

- Jesus – *“My purpose is to give life in all its fullness.”* (John 10:10)

We Can Encounter The Lord In Powerful Ways By:

- **WORSHIPING HIM**

- *“They entered the house and saw the child with His mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped Him.”* (Matthew 2:11)
- **We worship the Lord by expressing our love and adoration for Him and by prioritizing Him in our lives.**
- Jesus - *“You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.”* (Mark 12:30)
- **If we really love the Lord we will strive to: 1) daily connect with Him, 2) determinedly live for Him, 3) enthusiastically serve Him, and 4) weekly worship Him with other believers.**
- Jesus - *“Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and He will give you everything you need.”* (Matthew 6:33)

- **GIVING TO HIM**

- *“Then they opened their treasure chests and gave Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.”* (Matthew 2:11)
- **The gift of gold brought by the Magi reminds us that Jesus is the King of all Kings.**
 - *“On His robe at his thigh was written this title: King of all kings and Lord of all lords.”* (Revelation 19:16)
- **The gift of frankincense brought by the Magi reminds us that Jesus is the Priest or Mediator between God and mankind.**
 - *“There is one God and one Mediator who can reconcile God and humanity - the man Christ Jesus. He gave His life to purchase freedom for everyone.”* (1 Timothy 2:5-6)
- **The gift of myrrh brought by the Magi reminds us that Jesus is mankind’s Savior, and that He died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins.**
 - *“Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.”* (1 Peter 3:18)
- **One way we can give to the Lord this Christmas season is by giving generously to our *Everyone Needs Jesus* Christmas Missions offering (www.celebrationchurch.org/christmasmissions).**

- **When we give to the Lord our lives, worship and gifts, we experience great joy in our hearts and lives.**

- Jesus – *“I have told you this so that My joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.”* (John 15:11)

- **We should give Jesus not only our lives, worship and gifts - but we should also give Him our worry, hurts and grief.**

- **When we give Jesus our worry, He gives us His peace; when we give Him our hurts, He gives us His healing; and when we give Him our grief, He gives us His joy.**

- ***What steps do I need to take to “seek the Lord” and “surrender to Him” this Christmas season?***