

KEEPING CHRIST AS THE FOCUS OF CHRISTMAS:

5 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS REFLECTIONS

This time of year “to do” lists can become more the focus of Christmas than Christ. We easily find ourselves busy with finding the right gifts for family and friends, baking, cooking, wrapping presents, attending parties, and preparing for Christmas; which can leave us exhausted.

Let's commit to keeping Christ the focus of Christmas with 5 days of Christmas reflection.



DAY 1:

Make quiet time a priority. Taking time early in the morning proves to be a good way to start the day. Focus on Immanuel: God is with us.

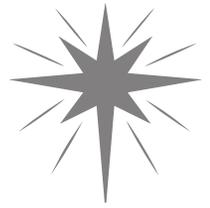
Read Matthew 1:18-23

This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”).

Reflection: What did Jesus give up by coming to earth to be with us? Sit in silence and quiet your heart before the Lord. Ask Him to help you to focus on what matters this Christmas.



DAY 2:

Are you ready for God's blessings in your life? Blessings from the Lord on Mary and Elizabeth.

Read: Luke 1:39-45

At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!"

Reflection: It takes focus to actively listen to the Holy Spirit and to follow with faithful obedience. What steps of faith did Mary take when she heard from an angel she would be Jesus' mother? She was encouraged when God affirmed her through her relative Elizabeth!

What is God telling you? Take some time to focus on His promises and watch for His hand to be working in your life.



DAY 3:

Focus on the Christmas star as a promise from God and symbol of hope.

Read: Matthew 2:1-10

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."

When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written: "But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel."

Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him."

After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed.

Reflection: A star is a glimmer of light in the dark sky and a great reminder of how much God loves you—sending His only son to earth to eventually die for our sins. We will have eternal life—and hope!

Pray God opens a door to share this hope with others in your life.



DAY 4:

Focus on the gift of Good News of great joy!

Read: Luke 2:4-14

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

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. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

Reflection: God sent an angel of the Lord to tell the shepherds about the Good News of Jesus being born. That Good news is still offered today! Spend time in prayer and worship thanking God for Jesus this Christmas.



DAY 5:

The day after Christmas focus on what God has given us today! Peace.

Read John 16:33

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

Reflection: Peace is something only God can give, take heart! Rest in His peace today.