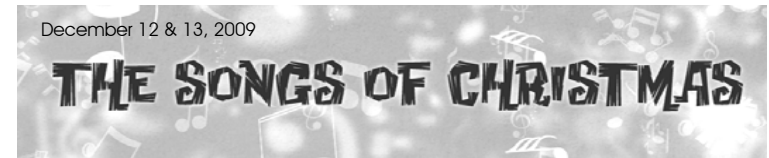


STUDY & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ❖ What ideas or scriptures from this message have stuck with you? Are there any attitudes or actions you sense God prompting you to put in your life as a result?
- ❖ What warm Christmas memories or traditions did your family have when you were a grade-school child? Why are these important for people to have? Have you been able to help make Christmas memories for a child? Which was more fun – making or enjoying Christmas memories?
- ❖ Brainstorm together a list of obstacles and practical problems Mary's "miracle conception" created for her and Joseph, her betrothed. Which would have seemed to greatest to her? To Joseph? (John 8:19, 39-42 may well reflect the suspicions some had about Jesus' conception and birth heritage. Later historical writings of Jewish Rabbis even openly speculated a sexual encounter Mary had with a Roman, occupying soldier had resulted in Jesus' birth!)
- ❖ What **choices** do you see Mary making in Luke 1:26-56 that are worth pointing out? How would you describe Mary's faith, and what do you appreciate most about her? Why do you think God chose her to give birth to Jesus?
- ❖ Look again at Job's feelings of despair in Job 6:11-13 due to his sufferings and trials. What connections are there between our "strength," "prospects," "power," "success," "hope," and "patience?" What would've been your counsel to Job, knowing what you do about his story and God's Word?
- ❖ When were you recently fearful but believing? How did God meet you in your need? Is there an area of your life where you need to believe that "Nothing is impossible with God.?"



"The Christmas Song"

Luke 18:15-17 (CEV) Some people brought their little children for Jesus to bless. But when his disciples saw them doing this, they told the people to stop bothering him. So Jesus called the children over to him and said, "Let the children come to me! Don't try to stop them. People who are like these children belong to God's kingdom. You will never get into God's kingdom unless you enter it like a child!"

Joel 2:28-30 (NIV) "I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions."

Doing Christmas with imagination

* **Mary – dreamer of dreams!**

See Luke 1:26-56 (p.1012)

1. Take awe at natural wonders!

2. Open your eyes to spiritual realities!

Ephesians 1:18-19 (NIV) "I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe."

Hebrews 11:27 (NLT) It was by faith that Moses left the land of Egypt. He was not afraid...Moses kept right on going because he kept his eyes on the one who is invisible.

3. Take delight in joyful experiences!

Romans 12:12 (NCV) Be joyful because you have hope. Be patient when trouble comes, and pray at all times.

4. Keep believing hopeful possibilities!

Job 6:11 (NIV) "What strength do I have, that I should still hope? What prospects, that I should be patient?"

Jeremiah 1:7-8 (ESV) The Lord said to me, "Do not say, 'I am only a youth'... for I am with you to deliver you, declares the Lord."

Psalms 146:5-6 (NIV) "Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD his God, the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them-- the LORD, who remains faithful forever."

Additional message notes & actions to take:

Bible Versions used: KJV-King James; NKJV-New King James; NIV-New International; NCV-New Century; TLB-Living Bible; NLT-New Living Translation; Msg-The Message; GW-God's Word; TEV-Today's English; CEV-Contemporary English; NAS - New American Standard; NJB-New Jerusalem Bible; HCSB-Holman Christian Standard; Phi-Phillips Translation; Amp-Amplified Bible; NRSV-New Revised Standard

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