



“My soul exalts the Lord,
And my spirit has rejoiced in
God my Savior.”

Keep Focused

Series: *The Christmas You've Always Longed For (#2)*

Matthew 1; Luke 1 & 2

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December 10, 2023

Theme: **A Christ-honoring Christmas requires a Christ-centered focus.**

Mary's Focus On God.

1. Some examples of her inevitable and mounting distractions.
(Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:29, 56; 2:1-5)
2. Some examples of her process to manage the distractions. (Luke 1:29, 38, 46-56; 2:19)
3. Some examples of God's provisions for the distractions. (Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 2:1-5)

Your Focus On God.

1. Expect distractions.
2. Fulfill your responsibility to keep focused.
3. Rely on God to do His part.

In My Life This Week

As you use this daily guide, write out your observations and responses on a separate piece of paper and save them with this sheet for reference.

Monday. We are now into the second week of Advent. Have you taken time to slow down for reflection about the meaning of Christmas and what you can do to honor Christ? Read Mary's testimony in Luke 1:46-55. List the main features or points you can identify in her testimony.

Tuesday. Mary was focused on God—on what God was doing and what she should be and do to honor Him. One of the ways she did that was to open her heart to the joy God gives and to find her joy in Him (read 1:46-47). Look through chapters 15 and 16 of the Gospel of John and note what Jesus tells us about joy. Do you really look to God for the joy you want? Remember, this is God's gift to you, even in the most stressful, hectic or difficult times. "The joy of the Lord is your refuge [or, stronghold]" (Nehemiah 8:10).

Wednesday. After Mary's opening statement in the first two verses, she gives her personal testimony of God's grace in taking her from a humble and obscure position to being known by all generations that have followed her. No, your blessings do not have such monumental historical proportions, but God *has* blessed you greatly. Make a list of God's recent blessings to you. After you thank God, share your praise with one or two others.

Thursday. Last Sunday we noted several examples of what God did to manage the distractions (see the outline on the other side of this sheet). God *always* works to keep us on track. It is never just up to us. As Christmas gets closer, are you asking and relying on God to do His work in providing for you in the midst of all the activity and distractions?

Friday – Saturday. Sunday our focus will be *celebrating whatever your circumstances*. Read Luke 2:1-20 in preparation.