

# WITH JOY AND WITH SONGS

Longing for Jesus // Matthew 1:18-25

***There is a Jesus-instilled longing in my heart that compels me to see the plight of my life without him (1:18-19), hear what he says to me in his Word (1:20), grasp the hope he offers (1:21-23), and exercise life-changing belief in his name (1:24-25)***

- Name a favourite carol or Christmas song. How does that song make you feel? Do the lyrics address life's difficulties?
- Most people don't spend all year listening to Christmas music. What longings do the most popular songs of our day typically express?

***Ecclesiastes 3:11b God has put eternity into the human heart.***

- *O Come, O Come Emmanuel* expresses the human longing for Christ to join our desperate lives on earth. Have you ever sensed a longing like this in your own heart? When have circumstances most recently left you desperate for the presence of Jesus Christ?
- What do you think Psalm 42:1-2a means? How can a person have a relationship with God and long for him at the same time? (Is there something wrong with us when we feel this way?)

- Look at Matthew 1:19 again. Before he knew God's plan, Joseph wanted to deal honourably with the surprising news of Mary's pregnancy. How have you reacted to disappointment in your life? Did any of your reactions bring honour to the people who disappointed you?

***“That’s where we all live: there’s a heaviness to life; we feel it b/c of the longing that God put inside of us; we have this innate sense that something isn’t right.”***

- Read Matthew 1:20-25. Joseph and Mary accepted unusual roles in receiving Jesus with an open heart and willing spirit. Through surprise and disappointment, God led them to joy. Through Scripture, their lives continue to testify about faith in God. What is your testimony as you approach this Christmas? Which parts of your life emphasize your open heart and willing spirit before God?
- Matthew remarks that Joseph and Mary did not sleep together until Jesus was born. Given the circumstances they faced, perhaps people may have expected them to behave differently and abandon God's standard for purity. How do you think Joseph and Mary overcame the shame, stress, and scandalization they must have endured as they obeyed the Lord?
- Do you believe God's Word equips you to know and obey him as you experience longing for Jesus? What have you resolved to do (or not do) as you wait on God to fill our lives with his presence?