



WEEK 2 DEVOTIONAL

ELF | The Gift of Joy

RECEIVE

Take a few moments to read **Luke 2:8–20**. Read these passages slowly, thoughtfully, prayerfully. Read in such a way that you imagine the Holy Spirit is trying to speak to you. As you read, journal words or phrases that stand out to you. Then go back and consider why those words and phrases caught your attention. Finally, read and consider where the Holy Spirit is helping you to live out these verses in your relationships and community this Advent season.

REFLECT

1. What brings about joy in your life?
2. How would you define joy?
3. Last week we learned that the shepherds were low characters in the culture of the day. What do you imagine as they are visited by angels? Would it strike fear in you?
4. And then the angels comfort them. Why is this comfort and reassurance so important? What were the angels doing for the shepherds?
5. Good news...great JOY...for all people...a Savior. Can the shepherds hear this if they are afraid?

6. "...good news of great joy that will be for all people..." What does that mean for you today? A theme word for the message is "JOY". What gets in the way of your joy? Is it busyness, frustration, cynicism, fear?
7. What is the first thing we learn of the shepherds after this announcement to them? What does that imply for you in this season? What news do we have to tell to the people?

RESPOND

8. Elf is characterized as living a childlike joy. What can we learn from that as we "curate" our holiday events this year?
9. The passage implies that if we are afraid we will not be able to see and appreciate the JOY that is given to us. Does that ring true to you? As you think about that, what fears can you identify?
10. The shepherds were curious. And they were open. How can we model that? What would it look like to be curious about what God is doing in these days of celebration and gift giving? What would "openness" mean in the conversations and opportunities that will present to us in the days ahead?
11. Finally, the shepherds took action. We may not have a sky full of angels to prompt us, but we do have the Holy Spirit. How can you listen for the Spirit's prompting in the coming days?
12. As you go through your week, be mindful of where you sense a conversation. Did you initiate? Should you have? Why didn't you? Write these promptings down and look for a pattern. Pray for what's missing—boldness, time, interest, curiosity? Ask God to show you how to be part of "good news of great JOY" this season.
13. With these new found insights, gather your favorite people, make some rich hot chocolate with plenty of mini-marshmallows and watch the movie *Elf*. Enjoy!

SCRIPTURE

Luke 2:8–20 | New International Version

⁸ And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

¹³ Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

¹⁶ So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

