



**WEEK FOUR**

JESUS IS BORN • LUKE 2:1-20



**SAY THIS:**

YOU CAN HAVE JOY  
BECAUSE GOD SENT  
HIS SON.



**REMEMBER  
THIS:**

"Always be joyful because  
you belong to the Lord.  
I will say it again. Be joyful!"  
PHILIPPIANS 4:4, NIV



**DO THIS:**



Turn up some of your favorite  
Christmas songs and enjoy  
caroling in your own car! Sing as  
loud and as joyfully as you can.  
Remind your kids, "You can find  
joy when you search for God."

**JOY:**

FINDING A WAY TO BE HAPPY,  
EVEN WHEN THINGS DON'T GO YOUR WAY



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## MAKING ROOM FOR JOY THIS CHRISTMAS

By Tricia Lott Williford

Christmas can feel complicated. There can be so many emotions, so many expectations, and so little margin to breathe.

For me, Christmas is compounded with sadness, remembering, and recurring anxiety. In 2007, two days before Christmas, my husband, the father of my two children, died. I want to embrace the season with joy, but it seems I have to wade through a valley of remembering before I can delight in the happiness. Joy seems to get smashed into whatever space is leftover, and sometimes that's not very much.

One day in December, *Joy to the World* came up on my Christmas playlist loop, and as I listened, I noticed these words anew, perhaps for the first time:

Joy to the world,  
the Lord has come.  
Let earth receive her king.  
*Let every heart prepare him room,*  
and heaven and nature sing.

I always thought of this lyric as my reminder to set aside the wrapping paper, shopping lists, and bows, to slow down long enough to make room in my heart.

But I know so much more now: If I'm not careful and intentional, sadness will take up every inch of my heart it's allowed. As I listened this time, it caused me to think differently, to make room in my sadness for joy; to allow my darkness to be soft enough to be aware of the light; to let sadness step aside sometimes; to

remember—for even a moment—that this season is about so much more.

Here are a few ways you can make room for joy this season:

### Start a new tradition.

If this is your first Christmas without someone you love, instead of doing what you've always done, choose something new and different to enjoy.

### Listen carefully.

I choose my holiday music with great care. Music triggers memories that may take me somewhere I don't want to go. Fill your heart and your home with the music that lifts your soul.

### Take five.

Start and finish your day with five minutes for yourself. Begin the day with intention, and finish the day with forgiveness. Read a book, write a note, or make a list of things that brought you joy. Give yourself margin to breathe, think, reflect, and remember.

Henri Nouwen said, "May his light shine in our darkness and may I be ready to receive it with joy and thanksgiving." If you are sad or distracted or busy or frayed this season, may your wounded heart prepare him room.

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