

## Simplifying Our Schedules

(during the busiest time of year when we try to do too many things to please too many people.)  
Message 03 of the series "Simple Christmas"

### A. The first Christmas Joseph and Mary had a hectic and stressful schedule!

"God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David... the angel told her, 'for you have found favor with God! You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus....' Mary asked the angel, 'But how can this happen? I am a virgin.' The angel replied, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby to be born will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God.'" Luke 1:39,56 (NLT)

"A few days later Mary hurried to the hill country of Judea, to the town where Zechariah lived. She entered the house and greeted Elizabeth.... Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months and then went back to her own home...." Luke 1:26-35 (NLT)

"Joseph, to whom she was engaged, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly. As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. 'Joseph, son of David,' the angel said, 'do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit.'" Matthew 1:19-20 (NLT)

"...because Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to go to Bethlehem (for a census) in Judea, David's ancient home. He traveled there from the village of Nazareth in Galilee. He took with him Mary, his fiancée, who was now obviously pregnant. While they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. She gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them." Luke 2:4-7 (NLT)

"The shepherds said to each other, 'Let's go to Bethlehem! Let's see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.' They hurried to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger." Luke 2:15-16 (NLT)

- *Mary got engaged, was visited by an angel, and became supernaturally pregnant with God's Son.*
- *Mary traveled 90 miles to visit her cousin Elizabeth, stayed 3 months, and traveled 90 miles back home while more pregnant.*
- *Joseph decided to break off the engagement once he found out Mary was pregnant... and that he wasn't the father.*
- *Their engagement was back on after her Joseph had a dream and was convinced the baby REALLY was from God.*
- *Joseph and Mary traveled 80 miles from Nazareth to Bethlehem for a census while she was VERY pregnant!*
- *Mary had nowhere to have the baby when she went into labor, so she gave birth in a barn using a feeding trough for a makeshift crib.*
- *Mary and Joseph had unexpected guests visit her right after giving birth.*

Note: Things were probably not all calm and bright or silent that first Christmas.

## B. Three ways I can simplify my schedule and reduce stress:

1. I can connect to God and allow Him to give me SELF-CONTROL.

“But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.” Galatians 5:22-23 (NLT)

“I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.” John 15:5 (NLT)

*Self-control*: the ability to control oneself.

“God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.” 2 Timothy 1:7 (ESV)

2. I can set the right priorities and boundaries in my life so I can have PEACE.

“Stop imitating the ideals and opinions of the culture around you, but be inwardly transformed by the Holy Spirit through a total reformation of how you think. This will empower you to discern God’s will as you live a beautiful life, satisfying and perfect in his eyes.” Romans 12:2 (TPT)

Life Application: We need seek God about our priorities. (God, Family, Relationships, Rest, Work, School, Hobbies...)

“Seek first the kingdom of God...” Matthew 6:33 (NIV)

Tips For Making Sure Our Schedules Reflect Our Priorities:

- *Put your priorities on your schedule first!* - When we say yes to one thing, we are saying no to something else. When we say no to something, we are saying yes to something else.
- *WAIT before saying yes to something.* - “For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it?” Luke 14:28 (ESV)
- *Learn to say no!* - “Let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No.’ For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.” Matthew 5:37 (NKJV)
- *Go over schedules with our spouses.* - “Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Romans 12:10 (NIV)

3. I can allow God to interrupt my schedule and experience true JOY.

“In all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.” Proverbs 3:6 (NIV)

“Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans.” Proverbs 16:3 (NIV)

*Chronos* - minutes and seconds.

*Kairos* - an appointed time, an opportune moment, or a due season.

Note: Some moments are more valuable than other moments.

“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” Ephesians 2:10 (NIV)

“Mary said, ‘Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.’” Luke 1:38 (ESV)

### **Connect Group Discussion Questions**

1. What is the farthest you've ever traveled for Christmas?
2. Do you have a hard time exercising self-control when it comes to your schedule?
3. What are your top four priorities for the coming year?
4. What is one thing you need to say no to in your schedule?
5. Read Acts 8:26-40. How did Phillip allow God to interrupt his schedule? Why is it important to surrender our schedules to God?