



**TREASURE AND PONDER**  
**#TREASUREANDPONDER**

By BARRY SHAFER

**1 Quick Backdrop**

It's one of the most famous descriptions of "pondering" in history, and it comes from the Bible: just after Luke described for us in magnificent detail the events of Jesus' birth; after Mary and Joseph made their treacherous trip (with Mary pregnant and riding on a donkey) to Bethlehem; after an anguishing search for housing; after Mary gave birth in a stable; after using a manger for a cradle; after a visit by working shepherds who were glowing from their visit from heavenly hosts. After all this:

*... Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart.*  
 —Luke 2:19

**2 Digging In (God, Show Me!)**

Take a minute to read Luke 2:1-21 from Mary's perspective, to experience "these things" that Mary treasured and pondered. As you read, write your thoughts on what Mary might have been treasuring or pondering at that moment of each "thing" she observed or experienced. Make some simple notes just as if you were Mary keeping a diary.

**3 Taking It Inward (God, Teach Me!)**

What's your take on Mary's thoughts? What do you think she was thinking as she treasured and pondered these things? Take a minute to ponder Mary's ponderings and journal your thoughts below.

**3 Putting Into Practice (God, Change Me!)**

Mary obviously understood the historic, even cosmic, nature of the events she was experiencing. This wasn't just an inconvenient trip to Bethlehem. The stable wasn't simply backup lodging. The shepherds weren't just saying hi to a cute baby. Mary was in the epicenter of an event that would change mankind. She understood the gift that she was helping to give the world.

And so can you. Every Christmas season is a celebration of a world-changing event. And when we experience Christmas with all its trappings—gifts, lights, plays, concerts—with the gift of Christ with us, we have the opportunity to treasure Christmas just as Mary did and continue its gift-giving power. So, rather than seeing the Christmas season as a season of busyness and receiving, let's try seeing it as a season of treasuring, pondering, and giving.

In the left-hand column below write down any events and activities that come to mind that are related to the Christmas season that you will be experiencing. We've offered some examples. You may need an extra sheet of paper or document.

Event (family gatherings, concerts, plays, acts of service, etc.)	What can you do to see this as a giving opportunity, rather than a receiving opportunity?	Treasure and ponder: Use this column to journal your thoughts about the event, either before or after. Or live tweet your ponderings with #TreasureAndPonder

Fold or Cut