

Christmas Hope

“Christmas Cheer or Christmas Fear?”

What Fears Am I Dealing with This Christmas?

1. The fear of *disappointment*.

- **Lk. 1:5-7, 11-13:** *“In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah; his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron. ⁶ Both of them were righteous in the sight of God, observing all the Lord’s commands and decrees blamelessly. ⁷ But they were childless because Elizabeth was not able to conceive, and they were both very old. ¹¹ Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him [Zechariah], standing at the right side of the altar of incense. ¹² When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear. ¹³ But the angel said to him: ‘Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call him John.’”*

2. The fear of *deficiency* (inadequacy).

- **Lk. 1:26-35:** *“In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷ to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. ²⁸ The angel went to her and said, ‘Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.’ ²⁹ Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰ But the angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. ³¹ You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, ³³ and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.’ ³⁴ ‘How will this be,’ Mary asked the angel, ‘since I am a virgin?’ ³⁵ The angel answered, ‘The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.’”*

3. The fear of *disapproval*.

- **Matt. 1:18-21:** *“This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, ‘Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.’”*

4. The fear of *different* (unexpected change).

- **Lk. 2:8-12:** *“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.’”*

5. The fear of *defenselessness* (losing control).

- **Matt. 2:1-3:** *“After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem ² and asked, ‘Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We*

- **Matt. 2:1-3:** “After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem ² and asked, ‘Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.’³ When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him.”

How Do I Overcome My Christmas Anxiety?

1. By ***giving myself*** to God’s person.

- **Lk. 1:38a:** “‘I am the Lord’s servant,’ Mary answered.”

2. By ***giving my ear*** to God’s voice.

- **Lk. 1:38b:** “‘May your word to me be fulfilled.’ Then the angel left her.”

3. By ***giving my praise*** to God’s glory.

- **Lk. 1:39-40, 46-49:** “At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, ⁴⁰ where she entered Zechariah’s home and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴⁶ And Mary said: ‘My soul glorifies the Lord ⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, ⁴⁸ for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, ⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me—holy is his name.’”