

# Christmas & the Gift of Peace

By Charles F. Stanley

Christmas sometimes passes like a red, green, and gold blur of lights, wrapping paper, and familiar carols. Bombarded by relatives, gifts, events, and special programs, there are times when this blessed season hits as hard and fast as a Texas tornado. It commences, whether we are prepared or not. And instead of joy, peace, and glory to God, it produces physical, emotional, and financial overload.

We often submit to the overwhelming societal and commercial pressures because we truly want to make the most of the season. But in the midst of the hustle and bustle, what we actually need most—spiritually, emotionally, physically, and relationally—is to be quiet and observant. We gain the greatest benefit from being silent and tranquil—cherishing the opportunity to reflect on Christ's birth and what our Savior really means to us. It is amazing the blessings and sense of peace we miss when we don't take the time to be still and see how God is moving.

Think about the people who first missed Jesus' birth. The religious leaders of Israel didn't realize the Father had sent the Savior, even though He announced through the prophet Isaiah, "The Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel" (Isa. 7:14). They envisioned the Messiah to be a mighty warrior who would free the nation, not that He would be born in a barn or that God's salvation would be accomplished on a cross.

Yet recall the people who did witness Jesus' birth. Luke tells us, "There were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord'" (Luke 2:8-11).

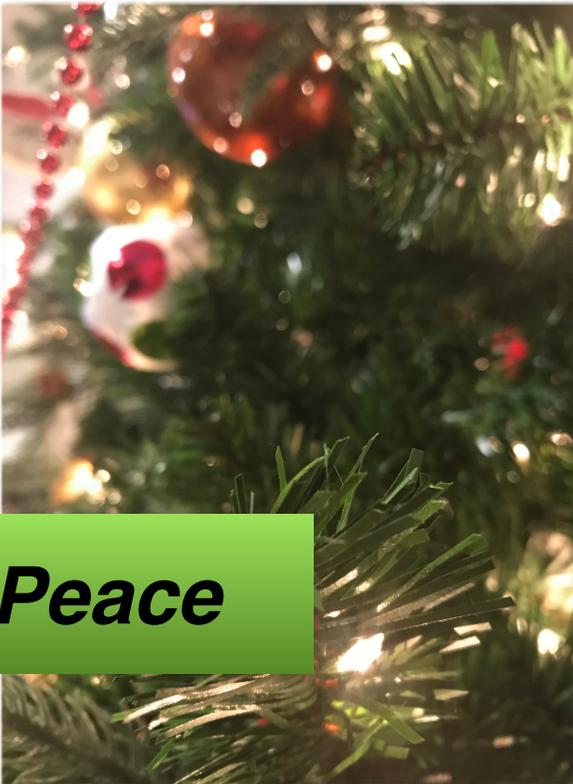
It was in the stillness of that quiet night in Bethlehem that the announcement came. And because their ears and hearts were open, the shepherds were blessed in an awesome way.

The same is true of us.

I've often said peace with God is the fruit of oneness with Him. Stopping in the midst of our hectic schedules and looking for ways the Savior is working is not only immensely important—it is downright indispensable. Through our time in His awesome presence, He settles our souls, fills our hearts with peace, strengthens us for the struggles ahead, and teaches us His ways. Could anything be more satisfying, important, or powerful than that?

This Christmas, make sure to enjoy moments of silence and meditate upon God's gifts of salvation, character, and His holy Word. Learn to look for Him in the stillness of the day, and anticipate His glory in the most unexpected places. In doing so, you will strengthen the foundation of your growing relationship with Him. And that's the very best Christmas present you and I could ever receive.

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## Gift of Peace

### Prayer Pathways

- Write prayer requests on the back of the Connect Card or FCCABQ app
- [prayers@fccabq.org](mailto:prayers@fccabq.org)
- Prayer Team/Pastors are ready following each service
- 505-229-PRAY (7729)

### Elder's Prayer

**January 27th at 6:00 PM**

Come for your private time of sharing and prayer. Arrive at 6 pm and one of our Elder's/ Staff will greet you and invite you to a private area for prayer, counsel and encouragement with our elders.

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