



WEEK ONE

LUKE 1:26-33, 38, 46-49

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SAY
THIS

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GOD GAVE US JESUS.



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MORNING TIME

When you go in your child's room this month say, "Good morning! Where's my [special name you call your child]?" Sit beside him/her on the bed and say, "Tell me, how do we know God loves us? God gave us Jesus!"

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REMEMBER THIS

"God has given a Son to us."
Isaiah 9:6, NCV

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BASIC
TRUTH

GOD LOVES ME

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LOWER YOUR EXPECTATIONS THIS CHRISTMAS

by Carey Nieuwhof

Expectations rarely run higher than they do during the holidays. From giving gifts to creating perfect family traditions. Expectations hover just beyond reach of achievability for most of us.

A few years ago I was listening to a speaker, and only remember from what he said. It was when he stopped his main talk and asked the audience, "You know what the secret to happiness is, right?" . . . (Pause) . . . "Low expectations."

It's so simple, a bit disappointing, and so true. The only reason you and I ever get disappointed is because we expected something better. Expect nothing, and you'll never be disappointed.

Lowering expectations could make this Christmas so much more enjoyable. Expecting the perfect gift from your spouse? Drop the expectation. Then you'll be happy with any gift. Worried about Christmas dinner? Prepare well, but forget about the picture of the perfect family dinner. . . . then you'll be happy even when the turkey you labored over for hours is overcooked and your third cousin twice removed is more than happy to point it out.

Lowering expectations also increases gratitude. In fact, I think it's the key to gratitude. If your expectations are

chronically high, you will never be thankful for anything that doesn't exceed them. Gratitude is easy to experience when you realize that spiritually, we are in a position to demand nothing . . . that what we've received is a gift from a Savior who is merciful . . . that what we've received is far greater than what we have deserved.

Lowered expectations might be a great conversation subject with your kids this week. If their gift list this year consists of a long list of specific items with size, brand, design and color all pre-determined, it's going to be hard to be grateful Christmas morning. Why? Because anything short of their exact expectation is disappointment. You might even want to have the conversation with your spouse. We can place unrealistic expectations on each other about so many things.

Why not think and pray about lowering your expectations this week? You'll take yourself less seriously, enjoy others more and be profoundly grateful for things you might have even resented otherwise.

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