



The Christmas season is full of joy, but it is also full of stress. And that's how it was when Christ was born—a time of joy and anxiety. Perhaps that's why four times in the birth narratives the angels say "Do not be afraid." This series will explore why Christmas should make us bold, because there's something about Jesus coming that makes fear leave.

Week 3: Fearless Obedience

1. Share about a time you obeyed even when it was hard. What motivated you to be obedient?
2. **Read Matthew 1:18-25.** What catches your attention the most from this scene of the Christmas story? Follow up: How would you feel if you were Joseph? What do you learn about Joseph's character from these verses?
3. **LETTING GO...** *Joseph never imagined that the future he had always imagined would be shattered after one unexpected and shocking conversation with his fiancé.* How did Joseph's fear of God affect his decision to stay with Mary despite the possible consequences? Follow up: Can you think of an example in your own life where your fear of God led you to make a difficult decision, despite the opinions of others? What did you learn from that experience?
4. **SO DON'T BE AFRAID... to trust when it is confusing.** Why is it important to trust and obey God even when it appears confusing? Follow up: Have you ever had to trust and obey God when you didn't understand His plan? How did that change you?
5. **SO DON'T BE AFRAID... to commit when it is costly.** What are some examples of Joseph's sacrifices and what can we learn from his obedience? Follow up: What sacrifices have you made or may need to make in order to trust and obey God fearlessly? How can you apply Joseph's example in your own life?
6. **SO DON'T BE AFRAID... to love when it is hard.** How do Joseph's actions in this story towards Mary reflect the approach Jesus would have later towards women who had done wrong (John 4, Luke 7, and John 8)? Follow up: How can we emulate Jesus' and Joseph's approach to love people well even when it is hard?
7. Rick closed by reminding us that *"Sometimes things just don't go as planned. Remember in those times that you are part of a bigger story, and you can be certain that the Author is good."* How can you remind yourself regularly that you are part of God's bigger story, especially when life doesn't go as planned? Follow up: What is one way you need to step out with fearless obedience this Christmas season and simply trust and obey?

