



## THE THRILL OF HOPE #1 :: Zechariah's Story {Andy Stanley}

### INTRODUCTION

As a child, Santa's arrival was filled with great anticipation. *When's he coming? Will he bring lots of goodies and toys? Does he have a special gift for me?*

There's always been a sense of anticipation around Christmas. The first Christmas was no different.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What memories do you have of unwrapping gifts or looking for hidden Christmas gifts?
2. What promises or hopes are you currently waiting for God to fulfill?
3. Do you ever wonder if being a follower of Christ is really worthwhile?
4. Read Luke 1:5-27. Given the history of the Old Testament, why would Zechariah and Elizabeth be tempted to give up hope that God would still fulfill his promise to deliver his people?
5. Is it normal for believers to be frustrated with unanswered promises? Should life be "better" with God?
6. If Christmas is a reminder that the proper response to the frustration of God's timing and unanswered prayer is *faithfulness*, how is *faithfulness* exercised in your life?

### MOVING FORWARD

Christmas is a reminder that God is active in our world and that he does keep his promises. Be reminded that neither your faithfulness nor your hope in God is in vain. Like the characters in the first Christmas story, and the generations that preceded them . . . wait faithfully.

### CHANGING YOUR MIND

*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. He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord."*

**Luke 1:13-15**