

## 1 Peter 5: 6-11 NIV

### “Beating the devil this Christmas”

“Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. <sup>(8)</sup> Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

<sup>(9)</sup> Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings. <sup>(10)</sup> And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. <sup>(11)</sup> To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.”

**The Christmas rush is about over, but there’s still excitement.**

**Kids likely think, “Let’s get this service over so we can get home and contemplate our gifts and peek at those packages.”**

**When they told one little fellow about his new baby sister born at Christmas time, that fact didn’t impress him.**

**When he went to school in the New Year, his teacher remarked, "I hear you have a new member of your family."**

**"Oh, yeah," he replied.**

**"What's the matter?"** his teacher asked.

**"Aren't you happy to have a new sister?"**

**"Yes, I guess" he answered, “but there were a lot of things we needed more."**

**One father had a great idea for his children's Christmas.**

**He ordered the plans for a tree house from a mail-order catalogue.**

**He received instead the plans for a sailboat.**

The man wrote to the company complaining about the error, but got this apologetic reply:

**"While we regret the inconvenience this mistake must have caused you, it is nothing**

**compared to that of the man who is out on a lake somewhere trying to sail your tree house."**

**One mother says that she’s always sorry when Christmas is over because she knows that after her family has hung up their stockings on Christmas Eve, it will be a whole**

**year before anyone of them will hang up anything again.**

**At holiday time one year, I talked with a small business owner.**



**Both in his business and marriage, things weren't going well.**

**He worked nights to pay his bills and to keep his shop open.**

His wife wouldn't talk with him and it looked as if she'd probably divorce him.

**“I'm trying to change the error of my ways, but it might be too late,”** he lamented.

**He was a tall, handsome, intelligent, honest, and religious fellow.**

**I doubt his problem was immorality.**

Likely, the fact that he was disorganized affected his business, his marriage, and his outlook.

For many adults, Christmas Eves often bring loneliness and like for my friend, a time when shortcomings tend to assault their minds.

**Can we fix the loneliness?**

**In the Lord, lonesomeness can be cured.**

**Three actions available to everyone help mend our sense of isolation.**

- **We begin by putting God first—by doing His will above all other things.**
- **Second, as our text says:**  
**“Cast all your anxieties on the Lord.”**



All the garbage that newscasters, gossips, and “sky is falling” preachers fling at us, the Lord wants us to lob to him so he can unburden us. We who think we so carefully follow God's word must pay more attention to what Jesus taught us about worrying.

As we'd toss stuff into a burn barrel or a rubbish heap, the Lord wants us to throw our worries, concerns, and fretting to Him.

**Recall what Jesus told his fretful disciples:**  
**“Don't let your hearts be troubled!”**

**As *Philippians* tells us, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, present your requests to God,” (4:6 NIV).**

- **Third, we do what we can to help others in need.**  
**God will take care of the rest.**

**The Lord doesn't require us to do great things; only to help others.**

**A true story illustrates this truth.**

**This story's title: “Christmas with Grandma.”**

“I remember my first Christmas adventure with Grandma. I was just a kid . . . tearing across town on my bike to visit her on the day my big sister dropped the bomb: ‘There is no Santa Claus,’ she jeered. ‘Even dummies know that!’

“My Grandma was not the gushy kind, never had been. I fled to her that day because I knew she would be straight with me. I knew Grandma always told the truth, and I knew that the truth always went down a whole lot easier when swallowed with one of her **‘world-famous’ cinnamon buns**. I knew they were world-famous, because Grandma said so. It had to be true.

“Grandma was home, and the buns were still warm. Between bites, I told her everything.

“She was ready for me. **‘No Santa Claus?’ she snorted. ‘Ridiculous! Don't believe it. That rumor has been going around for years, and it makes me mad, plain mad.**

Now, put on your coat, and let's go.’ **‘Go? Go where, Grandma?’** I asked. I hadn't even finished my second world-famous cinnamon bun.

“‘Where’ turned out to be Kerby's General Store, the one store in town that had a little bit of just about everything. As we walked through its doors, Grandma handed me ten dollars. That was a bundle in those days.

‘Take this money,’ she said, **‘and buy something for someone who needs it. I'll wait for you in the car.’** Then she turned and walked out of Kerby's.



“I was only eight years old. I'd often gone shopping with my mother, but never had I shopped for anything all by myself. The store seemed big and crowded, full of people scrambling to finish their Christmas shopping.

“For a few moments I just stood there, confused, clutching that ten-dollar bill, wondering what to buy, and who on earth to buy it for.

“I thought of everybody I knew: my family, my friends, my neighbors, the kids at school, the people who went to my church. I was just about thought out, when I suddenly thought of Bobby Decker.

“He was a kid with bad breath and messy hair, and he sat right behind me in Mrs. Pollock's second grade class. Bobby Decker didn't have a coat. I knew that because he never went out for recess during the winter.

“His mother always wrote a note telling the teacher that he had a cough, but all we kids knew that Bobby Decker didn't have a cough; he had no coat. I fingered the ten-dollar bill with growing excitement. I would buy Bobby Decker a coat!

“I settled on a red corduroy one that had a hood. It looked real warm, and he would like that. ‘Is this a Christmas present for someone?’ the lady behind the counter asked kindly, as I laid my ten dollars down.

“‘Yes, ma'am,’ I replied shyly. ‘It’s for Bobby.’ The nice lady smiled at me. I didn’t get any change, but she put the coat in a bag and wished me a Merry Christmas.

“That evening, Grandma helped me wrap the coat in Christmas paper and ribbons (a little tag fell out of the coat, and Grandma tucked it in her Bible). Then Grandma got a Christmas tag and wrote, ‘To Bobby, From Santa Claus’ on it.

“Grandma said that Santa always insisted on secrecy. Then she drove me over to Bobby Decker’s house, explaining as we went that I was now and forever officially one of Santa’s helpers.

“Grandma parked down the street from Bobby’s house, and she and I crept noiselessly and hid in the bushes by his front walk.



“Then Grandma gave me a nudge. ‘All right, Santa Claus,’ she whispered, ‘get going.’ I took a deep breath, dashed for his front door, threw the present down on his step, pounded his doorbell and flew back to the safety of the bushes and Grandma. Together we waited breathlessly in the darkness for the front door to open.

“Finally it did, and there stood Bobby. Fifty years haven’t dimmed the thrill of those moments spent shivering, beside my Grandma, in Bobby Decker’s bushes. That night, I realized that those awful rumors about Santa Claus were just what Grandma said they were: ridiculous. Santa was alive and well, and we were on his team.

“I still have Grandma’s Bible, with the tag for that coat tucked inside...\$19.95.”

**This testimonial doesn’t prove Santa’s existence.**

**Yet I believe this.**

**This true story illustrates how God assists us when do the right thing and act unselfishly.**

**Note: I think this story was in “Christmas Ideals Magazine.”**

This Christmas Eve, I pray we’ll resolve to serve others as the Christ child did when he was an adult.

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<sup>(9)</sup> Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings. <sup>(10)</sup> **And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. <sup>(11)</sup> To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.”**

Bob Blair

PO Box 176

Cleghorn, IA 51014

[www.robertblairbooks.com](http://www.robertblairbooks.com)

*Go with God into 2024  
holding tightly  
to Jesus' hand.*



שָׁלוֹם

Shalom

Peace to all!

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