



# my Imperfect Christmas

## Pt. 2: It's Not What It Seems

Questions for further study and application:

**Day 1** Mary gave birth to her baby in what you could say were imperfect circumstances. Yet, in the chaos and craziness of everything that was happening, she paused long enough to take it all in and treasure those moments. She is at peace with how her story is unfolding. She could have chosen to complain and be bitter about that first Christmas, but instead, she lovingly preserved them in her mind. Are you allowing God to use your circumstances to shape you or are you allowing frustration to overtake everything if your plan does not match God's plan? This Christmas, choose to become accepting of His plan for your life and let go unrealistic expectations. Read Colossians 3:15. Seek peace in this season of holiday chaos.

**Day 2** There are some things in life that are not what they seem. Think about all the things that you believe will make your Christmas seem perfect. Next, write a list of anything you think you need to do, but you don't want to do. There may be some things on that list that are important to accomplish in this season, and you should do them. But, what if you took some of things off your list that make you more stressed out and unable to enjoy the Christmas season? Why not try to focus on what you can realistically accomplish and allow yourself to be present in the lives of those you love? Read 1 Timothy 6:6. Unrealistic expectations steal your joy. Let them go and find contentment.

**Day 3** Circumstances in your life aren't always as they seem. The perfectly wrapped present that gives way to a disappointing gift. The attractive girlfriend or boyfriend that is way more into themselves and will never make you a priority. Or, the "better" job that you went for and got, that in no way lines up with what you envisioned. Read Ephesians 1:17-19a NIV. Paul prayed for the eyes of your heart to be enlightened. He's encouraging you to seek a more intimate relationship with God. Challenge yourself to see beyond the surface of things. This season, look for opportunities to love others as God loves you.

**Day 4** Over 400 years passed between the time of the Old Testament and the birth of Jesus. It seems as though God was silent, but silence is not always as it seems. You have experienced or may currently be experiencing a season where God seems distant. When God is quiet, your faith may waiver more easily. In actuality, this is the time to be strong in your faith. He's taking you through a season of preparation. He's refining you, restoring you, and strengthening you for something amazing. Read Isaiah 26:3. If you are going through a season where God is being quiet, keep your faith strong. You want to be ready when God says "Go!"

**Day 5** Jesus isn't always what He seems. Jesus came to Earth as a baby in a manger, but is actually the King of the Universe. Read Psalm 145:14-19. Do you mainly view Jesus as a baby in the manger or do you see him as Creator of the world? How can your view of Jesus limit your faith in what He can do? Life is always serving up curve balls, and it can be easy to doubt God's plan for your life. When you're disappointed because your plans haven't gone the way you thought, don't let your faith waiver. Instead, hold on tight to Jesus, because He'll never let you go.

## What's New?

On Sunday, December 10, we have our annual Heart For The House Offering. We are thankful for all God has done in 2017 and look forward to all He will do in 2018. This is a chance for each of us to give our best to help keep our house healthy and strong!