

CHRISTMAS INSIDE OUT -
FROM FRUSTRATION TO PEACE OF MIND
LUKE 2:1-7, 25-35, MATTHEW 2:1-18, JOHN 1:1-12

"At that time the Roman emperor, Augustus, decreed that a census should be taken through the Roman Empire. This was the first census taken when Quirinium was governor of Syria.) All returned to their own ancestral towns to register for this census. And because Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to go to Bethlehem in Judea, David's ancient home. He traveled there from the village of Nazareth in Galilee. He took with him Mary, to whom he was engaged, who was now expecting a child. And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. She gave birth to her firstborn Son. She wrapped Him snugly in strips of cloth and laid Him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them." (Luke 2:1-7)

- **After an unusual engagement, a difficult journey, and no available lodging, Jesus' birth must have been both miraculous and frustrating for Joseph and Mary.**
- **The Christmas season is also frustrating for many people today.**
- **Google defines "frustration" as "the feeling of being upset or annoyed, especially because of the inability to change or achieve something."**
- **Even though our frustrations can make us feel confused, God's presence is often revealed through "frustrating" situations.**
- ***How can I move from Frustration to Peace of Mind this Christmas season?***

Moving From Frustration to Peace of Mind at Christmas Includes:
UNDERSTANDING THE <u>CAUSES</u> OF OUR FRUSTRATION

- The Angel - *"You are to name Him Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."* (Matthew 1:21)

- **We may not always realize it, but frustration is often caused by our sinfulness and the sinfulness of others.**
- **Unless we've been visited by an angel, it's difficult for many of us to see the purposes behind our frustrations.**
- **Our frustrations at Christmastime are often simply heightened frustrations of our lives - busyness, relationship struggles, financial strains, loneliness and grief.**
- **Even in our worst moments, we can take comfort in knowing the Lord loves us and cares about our frustrations.**
- *"Give all your worries and cares to God for He cares about you."* (1 Peter 5:7)
- **Many of us feel so frustrated that we forget the "reason for the season" and miss the joy of Christmas.**
- **Even though Jesus' birth was confusing and frustrating for Mary and Joseph, they knew it was a part of God's plan.**
- *"Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep His promise."* (Hebrews 10:23)
- ***What is causing me frustration this Christmas?***

Moving From Frustration to Peace of Mind at Christmas Includes:

LEARNING HOW GOD CAN USE OUR <u>FRUSTRATION</u>

- *"But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, are only a small village among all the people of Judah. Yet a ruler of Israel, whose origins are in the distant past, will come from you on My behalf."* (Micah 5:2)
- **God used Joseph and Mary's struggles in Bethlehem to fulfill prophecy and provide a way of salvation for us all.**
- **Sometimes our frustrations are actually connected to God's purposes for our lives; God sometimes uses our frustration to move us to His will.**
- *"'For I know the plans I have for you,' says the Lord. 'They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.'"* (Jeremiah 29:11)
- **We often become frustrated when we realize God's plans are different from our plans.**
- *"Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect."* (Romans 12:2)
- **God often uses our frustrations and restlessness to help us focus on His intentions for our lives.**
- *"Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing."* (James 1:2-4)

- ***What might God be trying to say to me through my frustration?***

Moving From Frustration to Peace of Mind at Christmas Includes:

RESPONDING TO FRUSTRATION IN <u>GOOD</u> <u>WAYS</u>

- *"Mary kept all these things in her heart and thought about them often."* (Luke 2:19)
- **What began as confusion and frustration became treasured memories for Mary.**
- **How we respond to our frustrations can help us transform them into personal milestones of God working in our lives.**
- **We can respond to frustration by spending time in prayer.**
- *"Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank Him for all He has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus."* (Philippians 4:6-7)
- **We can respond to frustration by acknowledging God's love for us.**
- *"This is real love-not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins."* (1 John 4:10)
- **We can respond to frustration by affirming the greatness of the Lord, especially when compared to us.**
- *"My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts," says the Lord. "And My ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so My ways are higher than your ways and My thoughts higher than your thoughts."* (Isaiah 55:8-9)
- **We can respond to frustration by choosing to trust the Lord.**
- *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek Him will in all you do, and He will show you which path to take."* (Proverbs 3:5-6)
- ***In what ways can I better respond to frustration in my life?***