



INTRODUCTION

The ingredients in the Christmas story seem kind of random: a decree from Caesar, an engaged virgin, an angelic announcement, three wise men, and no room at the inn—doesn't sound like the narrative we'd write if we were God. Some of the circumstances we may be dealing with this year aren't exactly what we'd write for our own story, either. In this message, Andy Stanley challenges us to respond to the seemingly random curve balls in our lives the same way Mary did to God's biggest curve ball yet.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is your most cherished family Christmas tradition and why is it special to you?
2. Read Luke 1:1-4. Do you think of the story of Christ's birth as a fairy tale or an "orderly account" based on the testimony of eyewitnesses? Explain.
3. Is it easy or difficult for you to believe that everything in life happens for a purpose and according to God's will? Why?
4. Talk about a time when a season of tragedy or suffering caused you to wonder if life had purpose and meaning.
5. Read Luke 1:38. Can you imagine praying a similar prayer? What's stopping you?

MOVING FORWARD

In the face of life's seeming randomness, we can take comfort in the fact that God is active in the world. The Christmas story confirms that he is at work in the midst of darkness. As Christmas approaches, remind yourself of God's extraordinary love of humankind with this five-day plan of devotional reading and prayer:

<http://northpointministries.org/christmas>

CHANGING YOUR MIND

And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Ephesians 3:17b-19