

Read: Galatians 4:4-7

Christmas is the perfect time to be God's child

Galatians 4:4,5

But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Christmas can sometimes feel like it comes at the worst time. Students can be worn out from tests and all the activities. Depending on where you live, you might have to drive through bad weather to get to church or visit your family over the holidays. Parents can get really stressed out too. Sometimes getting together with other family members reminds us of hurts and problems that divide us. And we're supposed to be filled with good news of great joy? It seems like the worst time for it.

It must have seemed that way to Jesus' mother Mary, too. Put yourself in her shoes. God caused her to be pregnant with Jesus before she was married. Wow, talk about bad timing! And now, when it was almost time for her to give birth, the government said everyone had to travel to their hometown. That meant a ninety-mile trip for a very pregnant woman, walking or riding on a donkey. And when she went into labor, there wasn't a hotel for her to stay in, just a barn. It seemed like the worst time!

It can seem that way to us, but God reminds us that his timing is perfect. God chose just the right time for his Son to be born. The nation of Israel was in rough shape, but that meant there were people who were looking to God for an answer. The Roman government controlling Israel was cruel, but God was planning on using them to put Jesus to death to win salvation. It all happened at a time when there were finally roads connecting the empire so the good news could be spread quickly. God's timing was just right.

And it still is. Maybe it's hard to focus on Jesus at Christmas. All the extra busyness can cause problems and fights. Or maybe it's just something going on with you that makes you feel like not hearing God's Word. Maybe you struggle with doubt; maybe you feel very angry or hurt by someone.

That makes it the perfect time to hear what God has done for you. Problems are real—Mary and Joseph faced them. But God promises you that he's adopted you as his child. That means he loves you, he forgives you, and he wants you to pray to him about your problems. You're not alone; God's there to help.

In the times when it seems everything's going wrong, it's the perfect time to know that God has made you his child.

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- Name two things you know your parents will do for you because you're their child.
- God says you're his child now, too. What are two things God will do for you?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- Why is it sometimes hard to focus on Jesus at Christmastime?
- What are some things that you can do with your family to keep your focus on Jesus?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Share a time when you didn't feel "ready" for someone to remind you about something the Bible says. Why might that have actually been the perfect time?
- List a problem or challenge that you'd like your family to pray about for you. Your Father in heaven is listening!

Closing Prayer:

Thank you, God, for picking just the right time to send Jesus to make us your children. Remind me that when other people are going through difficult things, it's the perfect time for me to share your good news with them. Amen.