



We all love to add some extra decorations at the Christmas season. This series wants to add some extra characters to the Christmas story who can add some needed “extras” to our own faith journey.

These questions are designed to extend the impact of the weekend message. Use them to go deeper in your personal study time, with your family and/or with a group.

1 What do you enjoy the most and the least about the Christmas season? What is your favorite part of how scripture tells the story of the first Christmas?

2 THEIR STORY... This message introduces us to Zechariah and Elizabeth. Their story will bless those of us who could use a little extra faith. **Read Luke 1:5-7.** What are some things that stand out to you about this couple? Why do you think they stayed faithful and obedient to God all those years even though they weren't getting the answer they wanted to their deepest desire?

3 After centuries of silence, God was about to make the most important move in redemptive history to date, and Zechariah was the first to hear about it. **Read Luke 1:8-20.** What surprises you about their story? Put yourself in the place of Zechariah. What would you think and feel as you listened to the angel? Why do you think God waited so long to answer their prayers?

4 Read Luke 1:21-25. Put yourself in the place of Elizabeth (in a culture where few burdens were harder to bear than barrenness). How do you think all of those years hearing “no” had impacted her life? Follow up discussion: In what ways can you relate to their struggle of wrestling with the silence of God? How is your relationship with God affected in those spaces and places? How does this point of the message (**You can be faithful yet not always be full of faith**) parallel your faith journey?

5 EXTRA FAITH BELIEVES... God will answer every prayer at the right time in the right way. Rick reminded us that “*The Bible says faith involves believing that God exists and that He rewards those who sincerely seek Him*” (see **Hebrews 11:6**). How should this impact our prayer life especially when we don't get a clear “no” to what we are asking for? Follow up discussion: Rick went on to say, “*Sometimes we give up on our prayers before God does.*” Share an example of how this has been true in your life. What can we learn from Zechariah and Elizabeth about God in times like this?

6 EXTRA FAITH BELIEVES... God still surprises us with the ways He demonstrates His faithfulness. What are some of the ways the Christmas story reveals a God that is full of surprises? With that in mind, how does Christmas remind you that God will not remain inside “the boxes” we build for Him. Share an example of how you've been surprised by the way God has demonstrated His faithfulness to you recently.

7 Christmas is the answer when you wonder if your faithfulness has mattered. Close by reading **Hebrews 10:23** and praying for those you know who are wrestling with the silence of God (ask God to give us all some extra faith).

