

Discussion Guide

Use this guide by yourself, with a friend, or in a group to help you pursue a deeper relationship with Jesus this week!

Open

As we continue in our Christmas series, this week Pastor Don examines the story of Joseph to help us see that we don't have to understand God's plans completely in order to trust in His purposes. Our passage for today is found in Matthew 1:18-25 which picks up the story of Jesus' birth after Joseph discovers that Mary, his fiancé, has become pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Joseph, fearing for her (and her reputation), begins to quietly make plans to let her out of their marriage covenant, but then God intervenes and gives him a clear path to take. To get your group started, let everyone share why they think our current culture is so drawn to scandal and gossip - and share any examples that illustrate their point of view...

BIG THOUGHT

Following God in faith means that we're willing to stay obedient to Him even if we don't get to see the whole picture of what He's doing in our lives.

Dig

1. To get started, read Matthew 1:18. What do you think Joseph would have initially thought upon hearing this news about his bride-to-be? (v. 18) What would have been your reaction if you had been in His shoes?

2. Now read v. 19. What positive character qualities do you see here in Joseph? What is his plan to handle this delicate situation? Have you ever been in a position to help someone who was stuck in a publicly humiliating position? What happened? Share with the group...

3. Now read v. 20. How does Joseph's experience of hearing God line up with Joel 2:28? Is this still valid for us today? Why or why not? And why does the angel make note of Joseph's ancestry? (see Psalm 89:35-37)? Finally, why was it necessary for God to miraculously create Jesus in Mary's womb? (see Isaiah 7:14)?

4. Now read v. 21. How does the angel explain the meaning of the name "Jesus"? How does this confirm what Jesus says in John 3:16?

5. Read v. 22-23. What does it mean to you to realize that Jesus' birth fulfilled a prophecy that had been written 700 years earlier by Isaiah? In what ways do you think Jesus fulfilled His mission of being "God with us"? Share with the group...

6. Now read v. 24-25. How does Joseph respond to the angel's message? When was the last time you responded to a clear leading from God that changed the direction of your life? Share with the group...

Take it Further

Talk with God about the areas of your life where you struggle with following Him in obedience, then thank Him for His faithfulness and ask Him for the courage and strength to trust Him.

Daily Readings

Day 1: Proverbs 3:5-6
Day 2: 1 John 5:2-3
Day 3: John 14:15

Day 4: 1 John 2:3
Day 5: Luke 1:38
Day 6: James 1:22

Memory Verse: Matthew 1:24



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