



**Educate  
+ Engage**



REDISCOVERING  
CHRISTMAS



Rediscovering  
Trust

### OVERVIEW

Although the Christmas season is entirely centered around the birth of the baby boy named Jesus, we also need to celebrate the young couple who put their whole trust in God's plan. God trusted Mary and Joseph to navigate the complicated journey of raising the Savior of the world. In order to honor God's plan, they had to trust His plan, His provision, and His promise.

#### **Scripture Passage**

Matthew 1:18–19 (NKJV)

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly.

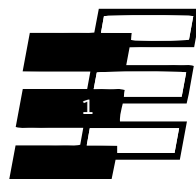
### EDUCATE

How would we feel if we lived in Nazareth and heard that Mary was pregnant even though she was not yet married? People would look at her funny and talk about her. We might even hear her testimony about the angel visiting her and telling her that the Spirit would overshadow her. Undoubtedly, many wouldn't believe her. Plus she had just spent a few months with her cousin Elizabeth out of town. No one in Nazareth could truly know what really happened.

She would face ridicule. She would have people who stopped hanging out with her. She would be mocked. She would need the strength that she received from Gabriel's message to her. Mary and Joseph were both visited by an angel who confirmed this plan was from God, but at the end of the day, they had to believe for themselves and trust that this indeed was God's plan.

#### **Trust in God's Plan**

Throughout Scripture, we see a pattern of God using people who trusted His perfect plan. Usually the plan seemed a little terrifying.



## Lesson 3

- Abraham had to trust God's plan when he was instructed to leave his homeland.
- Joseph had to trust God's plan when he was sold into slavery by his brothers and later imprisoned in Egypt.
- Moses had to trust God's plan when he was called to lead the Israelites out of Egypt.
- Joshua had to trust God's plan when he led the Israelites into the Promised Land.
- David had to trust God's plan when he quite literally faced a giant.
- Esther had to trust God's plan when she risked her life by approaching King Xerxes to save her people from genocide.
- Daniel had to trust God's plan when he was thrown into the den of lions for refusing to worship King Darius.

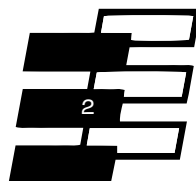
Then we see this young couple named Mary and Joseph. They likely knew Scripture. They had been raised honoring and fearing God. They had given of themselves to follow the Law. But God Himself stepped into their world and everything changed. It's hard to imagine the strain this must have placed on their relationship. Mary wondered if she was crazy; Joseph wondered if Mary was lying. Being visited by an angel gave some clarity to the situation, but they still had to manage what everyone else thought.

Sometimes God calls us to do things for Him that seem odd. Maybe it's a job change. Maybe it's a career path. Maybe it's seeking restoration when we would rather seek revenge. Perhaps God is calling you to unprecedented commitment that requires more of your time than you've ever given. Whatever it is, you may know in your heart that it's God's will, but you will still have to deal with the perception other people have. Trust in God's plan. Not everybody will understand why God has called you the way He has. Not everybody needs to understand. Commit to trusting His perfect plan and submit yourself to that path.

*Discussion Questions: When has it been difficult to trust God's plan? What gave you the courage to trust, no matter what?*

### Trust in God's Provision

Faith and trust at times seem like opposing forces. We pray for miracles, but God doesn't always perform the miracle like we think He should or would or could. In these instances, we have to draw from the trust reservoirs. Faith and trust are not competing sentiments. If we *only* had faith that God would do exactly as we prayed, it would slowly turn into "our will." If we *only* had trust, we would lose our sense of wonder and belief that God performs miracles. In the lives of Joseph and Mary, God performed an incredible miracle, but they still had to trust that He would provide everything they needed. They had to trust God would provide a place for their baby to be born, seeing the natural barriers they faced. It wasn't how they imagined everything, but God provided.



Philippians 4:19 reminds us that God will supply all our needs according to His riches in glory. In Matthew 6, we see Jesus speaking about this very promise when He talks about the birds of the air. He said they don't store food up in barns because they rely on God to take care of them. He also discussed the lilies in the field, how they don't toil or spin, but they are dressed immaculately. So then, He clarified, if God cares more for us than he does birds and flowers, why should we worry? We have a God who, like a Father, knows how to give good gifts (Matthew 7:11) and takes care of us. We can and should trust in His ability to provide for us.

*Discussion Questions: What do you need to trust God to provide for you?*

### Trust in God's Promise

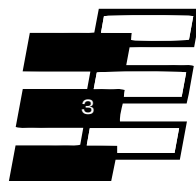
Despite the social stigma and potential consequences of Mary's pregnancy, Mary and Joseph trusted in God's plan and willingly followed His guidance. At the end of the day, they knew they had a promise. Mary knew she had favor with God because of the angel's promise. The promise affirmed that this baby boy would grow up to be the long-awaited Savior of the world. They also had a promise of divine protection, which comforted Joseph and gave him the wisdom he needed to proceed with their marriage and to follow God in the subsequent couple of years.

Around December, we sing the song "Mary, Did You Know?" It's a little ironic because, despite the angelic visitation, she probably had no real idea of what she was getting into. She likely couldn't fathom exactly the depth of the joy and pain she would experience. But she had a promise. If Mary and Joseph let go of that promise at any time during that initial season, humanity would have looked very different. Whatever you're facing today, don't stop trusting the promises of God. Second Peter 1:3 encourages that anything we need to live a righteous life, God will provide us.

### Closing

In the middle of all the celebration of good things, our trust can be developed in this season. We might be faced with uncertainty, but take note of Mary and Joseph's behavior in the middle of uncertainty—trust in God's plan. They knew the journey ahead of them would be hard, but they stood firm on God's promise. They were faced with barriers that they also had to navigate from the very night Jesus was born to protecting Jesus from King Herod and beyond. They trusted God's ability to provide. They were able to do all of this because they knew they had a promise from God, and they likely reminded themselves of it often.

Don't be afraid to remind yourself of the promises God has made.



### ENGAGE

This week, make a list of things you need God to provide for you. These items could be spiritual, physical, financial, or emotional. When you make this list, take time to pray about each item and tell God that you trust His ability to provide. If there are situations you're trying to navigate that seem uncertain or challenging, surrender them to Jesus. Promise Him that you are willing to trust His plan and not rely on your own. These are the kinds of prayers that solidify our faith.

Next, make a list of the promises God has made you, and when He performs on those promises, thank Him for it, share your testimony, and mark them as fulfilled.

