

LIFE GROUP

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

In Trials December 8, 2024

Summary

God allows challenges in the lives of His followers—not to punish but to prepare them. Joseph’s story shows that trials test our character, trust and perseverance, shaping us for God’s purposes. Through his obedience and faith, Joseph shows how "God with us" sustains and strengthens us in hard times. Jesus, who faced and overcame great suffering, is our source of wisdom, trust and strength in our struggles.

Scripture

This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about^[a]: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet^[b] did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”).

When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus. Matthew 1:18-25 (NIV)

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. James 1:2-4 (NIV)

Let’s Start

What part of the Christmas story most reminds you that God is with us, even in hard times?

Gratitude and Prayer

How has God worked in your life since we were together?

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Let's Talk

1. How does Joseph's response to Mary's unexpected pregnancy demonstrate his character and trust in God?
2. Reflecting on your own experiences, how have trials shaped your faith or prepared you for future challenges?
3. What does it mean to trust God's Word even when it seems difficult or counterintuitive?
4. How can the example of Jesus' suffering encourage and sustain us during our own trials?
5. What role does obedience play in strengthening our relationship with God, especially during challenging times?
6. Kyle talked about three ways that God is with us in our trials:
 - Jesus gives us wisdom when we are wronged.
 - Jesus shows us how to trust God's Word.
 - Jesus sustains us in our suffering.

Do you have a personal example of this in your life?

Let's Act

How can you encourage someone who is in the midst of a trial this week?
