

GIFTED

What Christmas Means for You.



LESSON 2 // DISCOVERING GOD'S PLAN

Big Idea: As we saw in our last lesson, God uses flawed, ordinary people to fulfill His plan. Joseph was an ordinary man, but he demonstrated character traits that allowed him to be used in God's plan to bring His Son into the world.

For you to be used by God, you need to be serious about your relationship with Him, as Joseph was. You also need to keep a soft heart toward God and His purpose—and toward others that He puts in your life. And you must be patient with the process the Lord brings you through.

Matthew 1:20-25 (NIV) *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.*

Start Talking:

Are you more likely to react emotionally or respond thoughtfully when challenging situations confront you? Why do you think this is the case?

Start Thinking:

Read Joshua 1:8 and Psalm 119:97-98. How do these verses encourage you to follow seriously after God and His Word? What blessings are promised when you do?

Read Psalm 103:8-12. What do you learn from this Scripture about God's heart for people? How should this impact your heart toward others?

Read Proverbs 10:12 and 1 Peter 4:8. What does it mean to you that love "covers over all wrongs" (Proverbs 10:12)? How did Joseph demonstrate this? How can you express this kind of love in your relationships?

Read Matthew 1:20 and Galatians 5:22-23. In what ways are patient people in a much better position to be used by God than those who are rushed and impatient?

Start Praying and Doing:

Pray that God will make and keep your heart soft toward the people He has put in your life. Ask Him to give you the patience not to react harshly out of anger but with grace and kindness, even in the most trying situations.

Proverbs 15:1 says that "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger." Deliberately plan and practice giving gentle answers this week. Prayerfully anticipate moments that might tend to stir up anger in you and choose patience and a soft answer rather than harsh words. Note in your journal what you learn from this and how you can apply Proverbs 15:1 more effectively and consistently in your life.