



THINK ON IT...

1. Describe a time when your life felt out of control (your example can be light-hearted or serious).

Read: Matthew 1:18-25

2. Our concept of the Christmas story has become quite sanitized over the years that we often fail to grasp the human reality of it. What would Joseph's reaction have been to learning that Mary was pregnant? How would you feel if you were in Joseph's place?
3. What do you think of Joseph's plan (v.19)?
4. What fear on Joseph's part does the angel address (v.20-21)?
5. What would it cost Joseph to go ahead and marry Mary?
6. In our journey of faith, God will require risky, sometimes frightening obedience and devotion of us. Can you recall a time when you were certain that God was calling you toward that kind of obedience and devotion? How did you respond?
7. How does the angel convince Joseph to go ahead with the marriage and become the adoptive father of Jesus? What is the significance of the angel telling Joseph what to name the child and how does the child's name indicate the significance of the child's birth (v.21)?
8. What's important about Matthew quoting Isaiah 7:14 (v.22-23)?
9. Apart from fulfilling prophecy, why was Jesus' virgin birth necessary?
10. Look again at v.24-25. What effect did the angel's message have on Joseph? Do you think Joseph's obedience to God came easy after the angel's visit? How did it remain costly? What sacrifices was Joseph now willing to make, and what do you think motivated them?
11. How have you experienced Jesus as "Immanuel" in your life?
12. What do you learn about obedience and devotion to God from Joseph? How can you put that into play in your life this week?