

Joseph: Embracing Shame for Glory

Study Questions: Week 3

[Matthew 1:18-24](#)

Joseph, a humble and righteous man, embraces the shame of his unborn son to obey the plans that the Father has laid out for him. He allows his own comfortable life plans to be disrupted for the sake of being a part of what God is doing in the world to save his people.

Application

1. Bill points out that Joseph could have publicly shamed Mary when he found out she was pregnant, but instead started to handle a divorce quietly. How might you apply this to your life? Is there a situation or wound in your life now where you could exercise humility instead of gaining vindication for yourself?
2. In Matthew 1:20, the angel says to Joseph, “do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife.” If you’re going to be used by God, there will be a time when you’re going to be afraid. There will be a time when, like Joseph, you’re going to have to risk; you may be concerned with protecting your reputation or maintaining your dreams of a simpler life or of comfort. Where are you afraid? Where in your life do you need to hear the words, “do not be afraid”? What dreams or comforts are you clinging to?
3. God placed an opportunity in front of Joseph where it was clear that his entire life would be disrupted in some significant ways. How has following Jesus disrupted your home, finances, security, reputation, and comfort? In what area of your life do you need to just obey and put your life in God’s hands as Joseph did?
4. In your places of pain and brokenness, God is not absent. Your great hope in life is in the things that disrupt your plans and that inflict the most pain on you. It’s not that God loves you but couldn’t do anything about it—it’s that God was there in it. Share an example from your life where you’ve seen the hope that has resulted from disruption. How have you processed the reality that God was in that disruption, permitting it for your good and his glory?
5. Mary belonged to God before she was Joseph’s wife. Joseph might have felt like he deserved a better explanation, but the reality is that God chose Mary and claimed her as his own, and she belongs to him. Who are you treating as if they belong to you? Who do you need to entrust to God today?

Key Points

- God is going to constantly put something in front of us where we have to decide: Am I going to protect my comfort, desires, and plans for my life, or am I going to step into what God has for me?
- If you are a parent, your children will know that Jesus is powerful and worth sacrificing for by growing up in a home where they see their parents sacrificing for other people, and they watch others' lives be changed by it.
- To Joseph, this situation looks like a great tragedy—like one of the biggest wounds that could ever be inflicted on a man. He thinks it's because of Mary's sin, but the reality is: God did this. God is in every detail and every moment, working out his plan. In the same way as Joseph, we can trust that God is working.
- Just like Joseph, we are a part of what God is doing in the world—saving his people. We have to willingly choose to deny ourselves something (even desires that might be “good”) and sacrifice in order to be a part of life change in others. God will use every means to accomplish his purposes, and we are a part of the means.
- Hold your plans loosely—no matter how good they are or how much you feel like you can justify them—not because losing them won't be painful, but because even if you lose them, you can trust him. He has already lost everything for you.

Scripture References

[John 8:41](#)

[Luke 2](#)

[Isaiah 7:14](#)

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