

Joseph's Dilemma  
Matthew 1:18-25

Review:

1. Even though he didn't believe Mary's story, Joseph decided not to humiliate her publicly because true love is more concerned with the needs of the beloved than the feelings of the self
2. Joseph thus models for us the self-sacrificial, unconditional love of God for undeserving sinners
3. Joseph was willing to believe what the angel told him in a dream and gave the child the name "Jesus" because he wanted to be obedient to God
4. Joseph thus models the way we should respond to God's gracious love – obeying and trusting Him even when we don't understand His will and His way.

Reflect:

1. What part of God's word do you have a hard time understanding?
2. What circumstances has God brought into your life that don't make sense to you?
3. How does the kind of love Joseph had for Mary challenge the way you love other people?

Go further: Read Luke 1:26-38

1. Where did God send Gabriel?
2. How does verse 27 describe Mary?
3. In verse 28, what title does Gabriel use for Mary? How does Gabriel describe Mary's relationship with God?
4. What was Mary's initial reaction to Gabriel's greeting?
5. In verse 30, what reason does Gabriel give Mary that she should not be afraid?
6. In verse 31, what does Gabriel say will happen to Mary? What does he say she should call the baby?
7. In verse 32, how does Gabriel describe Jesus? What does Gabriel say Jesus will be called?
8. What does Gabriel say the Lord God will give to Jesus?
9. In verse 33, how does Gabriel describe Jesus' reign?
10. What question does Mary ask Gabriel in verse 34?
11. What explanation does Gabriel give Mary in verse 35? How does he describe Jesus, and what does he say Jesus will be called?
12. How far along was Elizabeth in her pregnancy when God sent the angel Gabriel? What was so unusual about Elizabeth having a baby?
13. What does Gabriel say will be impossible for God?
14. How does Mary describe herself in verse 38? What does she agree to allow God to do to her?

Summary and Application:

1. Joseph was called to believe the unbelievable, while Mary was called to take great risks in order to submit to God's plan for her life. Which of these kinds of faith do you find more challenging?