



Joseph & Mary | Luke 1:26-56 & Matthew 1:18-25

1. Is it true that people are increasingly seeking authenticity in a world of deepfakes? How is this an opportunity and/or a threat for the church? Discuss the implications of your deliberations concerning the way we live our Christian lives.
2. Read Matthew 1:18-25. What strikes you as you hear these familiar words?
3. What from Matthew's gospel account of Joseph helps us see that he was a righteous, God-fearing, individual? Discuss Joseph's options concerning his situation prior to the angel appearing to him in a dream. What options did he have after the dream? How did the dream influence his decision, if at all?
4. Can you think of an occasion when you've been contemplating the right thing to do and God has somehow confirmed or maybe even altered your decision through a dream, a vision or by some other less dramatic means?
5. Are there other Bible stories where God has honoured an individual's faithfulness in the small(er) things and then used them to do greater things? Was Chris right to suggest Joseph was faithful in obscurity, even before he had the dream, and that's why God used him?
6. Read Luke 1:26-38. What strikes you as you hear these familiar words? If you have time, also read Mary's song in verses 46-55 and discuss how her song further illuminates her courageous obedience.
7. What did Mary do with her unexpected, unexplainable and (arguably) unwanted gift from God?
8. Have you ever experienced God asking you to do something which was inconvenient at the time? Share stories of how you responded. If you said 'yes' to God, was it worth it? Chris said, *"It's probably easier in the long run to say 'yes' to God than to say 'no'."* Did your experience affirm or challenge this suggestion?
9. Although we've looked at Mary's and Joseph's individual responses to God (because that's how Matthew and Luke mostly deal with their story), discuss their response as a couple before God. What encourages you and/or challenges you from what you discuss together?
10. For personal reflection: Are there areas of your own walk with God where you could seek to pursue greater authenticity? What impact might this have upon your witness?



What did you discover about God in this passage?
 What did you discover about people in this passage?
 How will you commit to obey this passage this week?
 With whom will you share what you have learned?

