



20 ...an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. "Joseph, son of David," the angel said, "do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit.

21 And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

22 All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord's message through his prophet:

23 "Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means 'God is with us.'" Matthew 1:20-23 (NLT)

### Three things God makes clear to Joseph:

- Don't be afraid.
- Don't give up .
- Don't forget who is in control.

A valley: a season of trials or difficulty.

- Valleys are designed to go through.

4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. Psalm 23:4 (ESV)

- We may enjoy God on the mountaintops, but we get to know God intimately in the valleys.
- God will allow valleys so we will get to know Him.

Matthew 1:18 through 2:23

### Going through a valley doesn't mean:

- God has left you.

20 ...And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Matthew 28:20 (NIV)

Valleys teach us to look for God.

- You are vulnerable.

5 Blessed are those whose strength is in you... Psalm 84:5 (ESV)

29 He gives power to the weak and strength to the powerless.

30 Even youths will become weak and tired, and young men will fall in exhaustion.

31 But those who trust in the LORD will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint. Isaiah 40:29-31 (NLT)

5 What joy for those whose strength comes from the Lord, who have set their minds on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Psalm 84:5 (NLT)

Valleys teach us to depend on God.

5 Trust GOD from the bottom of your heart; don't try to figure out everything on your own. 6 Listen for GOD's voice in everything you do, everywhere you go; he's the one who will keep you on track. Proverbs 3:5-6 (MSG)

- You're not where God wants you.

13 After the wise men were gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up! Flee to Egypt with the child and his mother," the angel said. "Stay there until I tell you to return, because Herod is going to search for the child to kill him." Matthew 2:13 (NLT)

Valleys teach us to trust God's timing.

4 But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law,

5 to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship. Galatians 4:4-5 (NIV)

- You've done something wrong.

Valleys teach us to trust God.

2 When you're in over your head, I'll be there with you. When you're in rough waters, you will not go down. When you're between a rock and a hard place, it won't be a dead end—

3 Because I am GOD, your personal God,... Isaiah 43:2-3(MSG)

## Have Questions? Text them to: (559)-464-5754

Here are some questions that can be used in Connection Groups:

*These questions also work well for your personal time with God.*

- What spoke most to you from Sundays Talk? Explain.
- With which of the 3 things that God makes clear to Joseph do you personally struggle?
- Why is it important to you to know that God is with you?
- Think through the Christmas story... What are some things in Joseph and Mary's experience that you would consider a "valley"?
- Do you agree that we get to know God more intimately in the valleys of life? Why is that?
- Do you ever feel that you are alone, and God is not attentive to your needs? How do you connect with God in times like that?
- Read through the sub-points of what valleys teach us. Which of these are most difficult to learn for you personally? Which of these gives your life great strength? Which of these is God currently teaching you?

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