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## Small Group Discussion Guide — November 30, 2025

- Series: God in Person (Advent)
  - Sermon: “Joseph’s Dilemma”
  - Scripture: Matthew 1: 18-25 (NIV)
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### FOLLOW-UP FROM LAST WEEK

How has realizing your status as “God’s Beloved” affected the way you’ve shown up this week, at work, school, home, etc.?

### CONNECT

1. What stood out for you from this week’s service, and why?
2. What’s a Christmas opinion you have that could get you in trouble?  
(e.g., “Hot chocolate is overrated,” “Hallmark movies are the same movie,” “White lights > colored lights”)

### ENGAGE

Read the entire passage aloud.

1. From this text, what are some things you immediately notice about Joseph?
2. Try to put yourself in Joseph’s sandals. What emotions do you imagine he experienced in verse 24?
  - How do you picture his first conversations with Mary after he woke from the dream?
  - What might the fallout have looked like with his parents and friends?
  - How do you think he navigated such a complicated, unexpected plot twist in his life?
3. Notice how all three members of the Trinity are mentioned in this passage. What role does each one play (God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit)?

### APPLY

1. The first Christmas was the moment God became real in a new, tangible way to Mary and Joseph. What external things tend to get in the way of you fully grasping the reality of God during the Christmas season? What about internal obstacles? Discuss ways you can resist the commercialized and hurried nature of modern Christmas and more fully embrace the simple, beautiful truth of *Immanuel—God with us*. What might this look like for you?
2. “It’s a counter-cultural idea that we don’t belong to ourselves—we belong to God, and He has authority over every part of our lives. Which areas are the hardest for you to surrender to His authority (career, image, family, finances, etc.)? How does Joseph’s quiet obedience help you move toward surrender in those areas?”

3. Joseph is a remarkable example of trust and obedience in a confusing time. The task given to him was daunting, yet he accepted it humbly without knowing how the details would unfold. Even so, he must have known that his life would never be the same.
- Can you think of a time when you sensed God calling you to something that became a turning point in your life? In what ways did God show up to give you strength and courage along the way?

### **PRAYER**

Father, thank you for showing us the example of Joseph, who had to confront the reality of You in the flesh during that first Christmas season. May the truth of You reorient our hearts to live under Your kind authority, trusting that You are a good Father. Thank you for being real — in history and in our hearts. Keep us aware of this, and help us to humbly and obediently submit to Your will each day. Thank you for coming to save us, Jesus. In Your name we pray, Amen.

### **GOING DEEPER**

Joseph obeyed God quietly, without applause, explanation, or clarity about the outcome. Right now, where in your life might God be inviting you to a similar kind of hidden obedience—and what fears, desires, or expectations surface when you imagine saying yes?

### **ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURE**

1 Corinthians 6: 19-20

Genesis 1: 2

Romans 8: 11

### **QUOTES**

“I believe in the Holy Spirit; the Lord, the Giver of Life.”

*Nicene Creed*