



Stuff They Didn't Teach Me In Sunday School



Episode 016: Joseph - A Man of Justice and Compassion

Matthew 1:18-25 (<http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%201:18-25&version=NIV>)

Joseph doesn't usually get a lot of attention in the Christmas story. That's a shame because he has a lot to teach us about being a good husband and father.

- What makes Joseph a great example for men to follow?

Put yourself in Joseph's shoes. Your fiancé is pregnant and you know the baby is not yours. You have two options: if you expose her you can protect your name and reputation. But if you divorce her quietly you can shield her from public shame and disgrace and leave people to think what they may.

- Which of these options seems more *manly* to you? Why?
- What are some of the dangers of being too just and holy in life?
- Is there a danger in being too compassionate?
- How did Joseph walk that narrow line?

The angel's message reassured Joseph that God wanted him to take Mary as his wife. Like bookends on his Gospel, Matthew describes Jesus with the name "Immanuel" or "God with us." His Gospel begins with the angel calling Jesus, "Immanuel," and closes with Jesus saying, "Lo I am *with you* always, even to the close of the age" (Matthew 1:23b; 28:20b).

- Why is it important to remember that during Jesus' life on earth He was *God with us*?
- What special impact does it have on you to know Jesus is with you always?

Next week we will look at the coming of Immanuel in Luke's account of Jesus' birth.