



Un CHRISTMAS

MESSAGE NOTES & SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE WEEK 2 – UNPLANNED PREGNANCIES

⁵In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah; his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron. ⁶Both of them were righteous in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commands and decrees blamelessly. ⁷But they were childless because Elizabeth was not able to conceive, and they were both very old.

¹¹Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. ¹²When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear. ¹³But the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call him John.

²³When his time of service was completed, he returned home. ²⁴After this his wife Elizabeth became pregnant and for five months remained in seclusion. ²⁵"The Lord has done this for me," she said. "In these days He has shown His favor and taken away my disgrace among the people."

²⁶In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." ²⁹Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be.

³⁰But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. ³¹You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call Him Jesus.

³⁴"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

³⁵The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the Holy One to be born will be called the Son of God.

³⁶Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. ³⁷For no word from God will ever fail."

³⁸"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

– Luke 1:5-7, 11-12, 23-25 1:26-31, 34-38 NIV

¹⁸This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. ²⁰But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will give birth to a son, and you are to give Him the name Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins.”

²²All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ²³“The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call Him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”). ²⁴When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. ²⁵But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave Him the name Jesus.

– Matthew 1:18-25 NIV

BIG IDEA

God _____ is _____ God _____

RESPONDING TO GOD’S UNPLANNED PLAN

1. God chose _____ over _____
2. God chose _____ over _____
3. Mary chose _____ over _____
4. Joseph chose _____ over _____

DIGGING DEEPER

1. Why do many of us struggle with unplanned events/moments in life?
2. What are some of the unplanned aspects of the Christmas story?
3. Why do many people try to put God in a box?
4. What does Luke 1:37 have to say about putting limits on what God has said that He can and will do?
5. Why did God’s plan to be with us surprise so many people?
6. What is surprising about the way that God came to the world?
7. What choice did Mary make when she was told that she, as a virgin, would conceive and give birth to a son?
8. What choice did Joseph make?
9. What are some ways that you try to put God in a box and fit Him into your plans?
10. How can you surrender to God’s plan—like Mary and Joseph—when it runs counter to your own plans?