

Date: _____



Shepherd's Path

A Shepherd's Personal Devotions Real Life Stories of God Sightings Series

Lesson 30

Lesson Title: Joseph and the Trip to Bethlehem
Take Home Point: God guides us so that we can point to Jesus.

Warm-Up:

Imagine you are driving through a city you have never visited before. Do you ignore the road signs that provide guidance to get you where you need to be? No! You pay careful attention to the signs to make sure you are on the right road and going in the right direction. Now imagine you are participating in a neighborhood treasure hunt. As you reach the location of the next clue, do you bother to read what it says? Of course you do! Without the clue, you have no idea where you are to go next or what you are to gather. Most people are fairly conscientious about following directions in cases like this. Why do so many people have such a hard time believing that God provides direction in the much more serious journey of life?

Read: Matthew 1:18-25; 2:13-23; Luke 2:1-7

Observation (What happened?):

How often did an angel appear to Joseph in a dream and why?

After each dream, what did Joseph do and when did he do it?

Interpretation (What does it mean?):

What spiritual traits did Joseph likely already have that he demonstrated in these events?

Why do you think Matthew was so careful to quote prophecy from the Old Testament after he recorded each dream, trip, and destination?

Insight:

Two impressions really stand out in this account about Joseph. First, what a flood of thoughts and emotions Joseph must have experienced as he was trying to make sense of who Mary's Son was and how he would take care of Mary and Jesus in these travels. His intended handling of Mary's pre-marriage pregnancy illustrated his sense of responsibility toward them. Now to be fleeing the wrath of kings by moving to different locations based on dreams must have kept his mind working overtime. Second, consider the tremendous trust and obedience he demonstrated time after time as he received direction from God's messenger and acted immediately. Even with the turmoil he surely had in his heart, he believed God was guiding and would take care of them. His quiet faith in troubling times is reminiscent of the Old Testament Joseph, who suffered many circumstances humbly and faithfully, depending on God for his strength and confidence.

Application (What does it mean to me?):

What is God guiding you to do? How is he guiding you? How are you making sure you pay attention and obey?

Think of different ways and times God has guided you in the past that you only realized when you looked back. Thank him for his care and guidance.

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