

Journey Through the New Testament

Matthew 1-4

Series: God's Assumptions

"Providence"

1-6-19

Introduction

Welcome to "Journey Through the New Testament" and to this important step in deepening your faith. Whether you are a seasoned student of the Bible or a novice, reading and reflecting upon scripture will strengthen your relationship with Christ and with those who journey with you.

God's word is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword. It penetrates to the point that it separates the soul from the spirit and the joints from the marrow. It's able to judge the heart's thoughts and intentions."

Hebrews 4:12 (CEB)

Group Guidelines

Make a commitment to daily scripture reading, reflection and consistent attendance.

Approach each days' reading and group time with prayerful anticipation.

Remember that each person is unique and in a different place in their spiritual journey.

Be patient and supportive listeners as members share their thoughts and questions, being open to various interpretations.

Come to the group willing to share your insights and how you have encountered God in scripture.

Bring a Bible to the group each week. You may wish to keep a few notes or jot down questions as you read each day.

Use the *Guide to Daily Reflection* as you read the scripture. Asking "What" will help you focus on the **content** of the chapter. Asking "So what" will help you sort out the **meaning** of what you are reading. Asking "Now what" will help you in the **application** of scripture to your daily living.

Pray that God will open your spirit to **hear** his Word and give you courage to **act** upon it.

Prayer Loving God, you call us to live in relationship with you; to experience your transforming love and grace in our lives and to accomplish your purposes. We

gather in faith, believing that you will speak your living Word into our hearts and minds. Guide us on our journey with you and give us the courage to become the people you have created us to be. Amen.

Opening Discussion

1. What challenges did you face as you attempted to read scripture each day?
2. What did you do to resolve these difficulties?

“This is how the birth of Jesus Christ took place...”

Bible Study Matthew 1:18-21 (CEB) Read aloud and discuss the following.

What?

1. What seems absurd about how the birth of Jesus took place?
2. What issues did Mary face? Joseph?
3. What promise does this account reveal?
4. What assumptions did God have in his relationship with Mary and Joseph?

So What?

1. So, what was the response of Mary and Joseph to the difficult assignment God had placed upon them?
2. So, what does this scripture say to *us* about who God uses to accomplish God’s purposes?
3. So, what does this scripture reveal about God’s providence?

Lesson Note: Definition of providence: the protective care of God, timely preparation for future eventualities (Oxford Dictionary)

Now What?

1. Now, as you have considered Mary, Joseph, and the birth of Jesus, what will you do in order to be more faithful to God’s call upon your life?
2. Now, what reassurance do you have that God is at work in ordinary people—like you—and will accomplish his purposes?

Closing

Your word is a lamp before my feet and a light for my journey.

Psalm 119:105