



BIG IDEA

The part God is asking you to play may be unexpected but it is never accidental.

WHAT DOES GOD WANT ME TO KNOW?

Think back on some of the most significant moments of your life. How many of those moments were expected? How many were unexpected?

Read Matthew 1:16-25. How would you tell this story in your own words?

Many people in your group may be familiar with this story, but asking your group members to tell the story in their own words will help them to better internalize it. This is also a good way to see if the story we think we know is actually the story told in Scripture!

Put yourself in the position of Joseph or Mary. What would it have been like to live in the scandal created by the virgin birth? What does their story teach us about the potential cost of playing our part in God's story?

Being with child before marriage is scandalous in many modern societies, but it was even more scandalous in the time of Mary and Joseph. **Read Deuteronomy 22:13-24** in order to get a better understanding about what *could have* happened to Mary had Joseph exposed her publicly.

As you can see, the cost to both Mary and Joseph was extremely high.

Recall Proverbs 3:5-6 from last week's Sermon Companion. How does Joseph model this passage for us?

We issued a challenge to everyone last week to memorize this passage. Use this question as an opportunity to create accountability within your group. Celebrate the people in your group who have it memorized.

WHAT IS MY INITIAL REACTION?

Describe a time when being faithful to God required you to be willing to look foolish. What did you learn?

Respond to the following quote from this week's message:

You never know how PLAYING your PART might factor in the Story of God.

How open are you to the "unexpected" in your relationship with God?



WHAT AM I GOING TO DO?

Read 2 Timothy 1:6-12. How does Paul's advice for Timothy apply to you? What part is God asking you to play in his story?

Paul is encouraging Timothy to play his part, despite the fears that may try to get in the way. Even though Paul endures a great amount of hardship for the sake of the gospel, he continues in his calling. The world may not understand, but Paul is not ashamed because he has entrusted his story to God.

What options have you ruled out in your life based on fear? What third option is God presenting to you if you will move forward in faith?

Third options are the space where God helps us to get creative in love. Don't allow your group members to be sucked in by the "fool's choice." This may even be a great time to stop and lead your group in listening prayer.

What customs or traditions might God be asking you to violate in order to play your part in his story? What is keeping you from saying "yes"?

Joseph would have been within his legal and religious rights to publicly expose Mary, but Gabriel presented Joseph with a better option. It is clear that Joseph loved Mary and was willing to do whatever it took to honor her and obey God. Who is God asking us to love in a creative way? Are we willing to obey him, even if that puts our reputation at stake?

How does Joseph's faith in this story challenge you? What characteristics of Joseph do you most want to emulate?

