

SESSION

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JOSEPH'S OBEDIENCE

?

HOW DO YOU RESPOND TO THE WORDS, "THERE'S BEEN A CHANGE OF PLANS"?

THE POINT ➤

FOLLOWING GOD'S PLAN WILL REQUIRE CHANGE IN YOUR LIFE, BUT IT'S WORTH IT.

▶ MATTHEW 1:18-25

¹⁸The birth of Jesus Christ came about this way: After his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, it was discovered before they came together that she was pregnant from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ So her husband Joseph, being a righteous man, and not wanting to disgrace her publicly, decided to divorce her secretly.

²⁰ But after he had considered these things, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because what has been conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

²² Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

²³ See, the virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they will name him Immanuel, which is translated "God is with us."

²⁴ When Joseph woke up, he did as the Lord's angel had commanded him. He married her ²⁵ but did not have sexual relations with her until she gave birth to a son. And he named him Jesus.



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

FACT:
THE YOUNGEST
MARATHON
RUNNER IN
THE WORLD IS
BUDHIA SINGH,
WHO FINISHED
48 MARATHONS
BEFORE HIS
FIFTH BIRTHDAY.¹

Throughout high school, I spent almost every day involved in athletics, and during the spring I competed in track and field. One day while I was running sprints, apparently I hadn't warmed up very well, because I tore my Achilles tendon. Ow! To this day, it's one of the most painful things I've ever experienced, but beyond the physical pain, I experienced suffering on a different level. Everything I had planned for the year changed in a single moment. Baseball, which was my favorite sport—Out! Riding my dirt bike—Over! For the next few months, things I had looked forward to were, from my perspective, taken away from me. And honestly, it was difficult to handle.

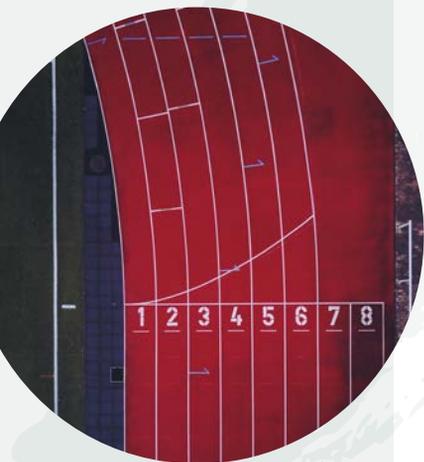
➤ **Describe a time a change of plans was difficult for you to deal with.**

Joseph surely had plans—marrying the girl of his dreams, working hard, raising a family. However, God stepped in with a change of plans, and given the things Joseph would experience in the coming months, this certainly wasn't easy. Scripture doesn't record Joseph's words, but we do see his response: he acted in obedience. Through Joseph's life we see that, although change is never easy, changing in order to follow God's plans is always worth it! The changes God makes are always for our highest good.

MATTHEW 1:18-19

1 What can we learn from Joseph's initial response regarding Mary's situation?

2 What options exist when we find ourselves where we didn't plan to be?



MATTHEW 1:20-23

- 3 What do the names given for the Messiah in these verses reveal about His purpose?
- 4 What evidence do we see in this passage of God's greater plan at work?
- 5 Why is it difficult to set our plans aside to follow God's plans?



Sometimes circumstances make us feel like God is not with us. That's when we need to take God at His word and trust He is present. #BSFLfullpicture



MATTHEW 1:24-25

- 6 Who have you seen trust God even when it didn't make sense? Explain.
- 7 What keeps us from quickly saying yes to God's plans?
- 8 When have you had to adjust to God's plan and trust and obey?

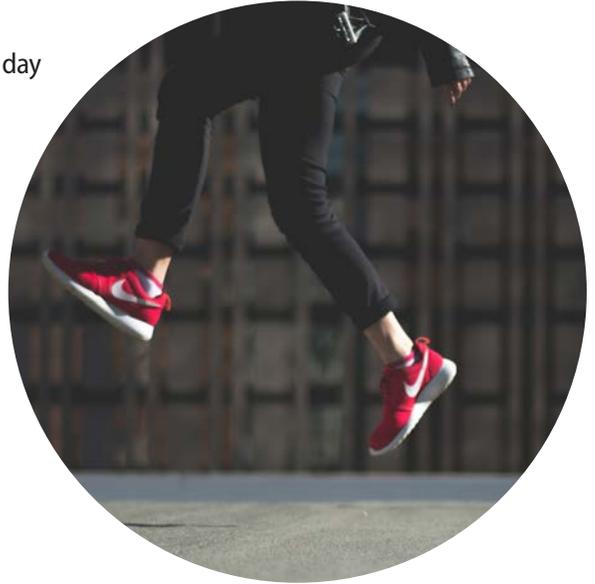


LIVE IT OUT

▶ CHRIST

Living in a relationship with Jesus means following Him day by day and living in obedience to God. This means:

- ▶ Spending time in God's Word in order to know Him.
- ▶ Understanding how God's Word calls us to live.
- ▶ Choosing moment by moment to obey.



9 How are you currently pursuing God in His Word?

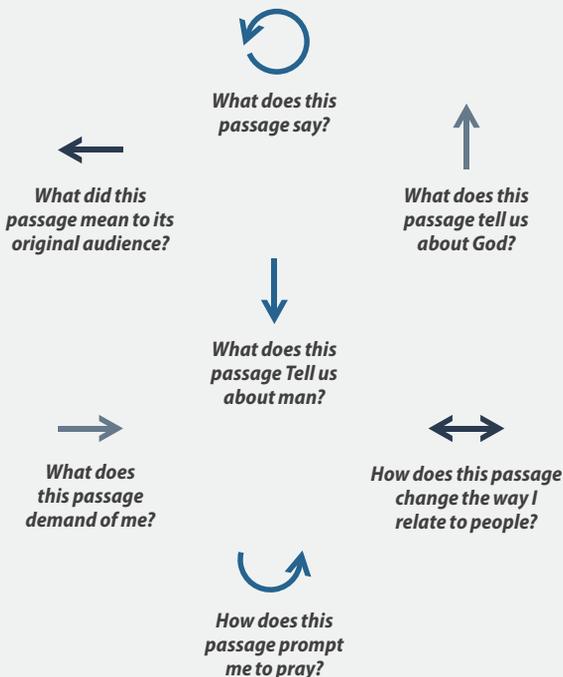
10 What specifically is He calling you to?

11 How will you live these out this week in order to grow in your relationship with Christ?

DAILY DEVOTIONS



THE 7 ARROWS OF BIBLE READING



DAY ONE JAMES 2:14

Our mouths definitely get us into trouble from time to time. Sometimes we brag about our abilities, and we can't back it up. Other times we promise our parents we'll follow through, and we forget. Whatever the case, we've all proven that talk is cheap, and we've been unable to "cash the checks" we've written with our words. If someone claims to have faith, that's well and good. However, if he fails to live it out, then the claim is absolutely worthless. Faith isn't a matter of simply believing, or even feeling, the right things. Neither is it forcing ourselves into joyless obedience. Genuine saving faith is trust in and love for God that translates into a life that bears fruit. You say you have faith. That's incredible! Now ask yourself—*Is it the kind of faith that produces a life of obeying God because you want to?* That's the only kind of faith that's valuable.

- **What in your life gives evidence of genuine faith?**
- **List some of the fruit real faith causes to grow in our lives.**

DAY TWO

JAMES 2:15-17



In our culture today, many people often separate spiritual things from our daily lives: *Church and faith are meant for Sunday mornings, and maybe a Wednesday evening every now and then, but the rest of the week is for real world things.* Scripture, however, tells a different story. Real faith will, in fact, impact every area of our lives. Real faith will cause us to do our absolute best on our schoolwork (and with a good attitude!). Real faith will motivate us to obey our parents. Real faith will even move us to love our teachers (What?). And when we see people in need, real faith will move us toward compassion instead of disregard, or even judgment. Genuine faith doesn't just live in our minds—it's expressed. Live it out!

- **In what ways has your faith moved you to care for someone in need?**
- **What needs are you aware of right now? What is God calling you to do about it?**

DAY THREE

JAMES 2:18-19

Faith is an idea which is central to our relationship with God. It means we believe in Him, and it means that we trust Him. Many people today think simply believing in the God of the Bible is enough to put us in good standing with Him. However, this isn't true! And James gives us the perfect example. He says the demons who once lived in heaven with God and once worshiped Him, the same ones who chose to rebel and who felt God's power when they were thrown out of heaven—these demons believe in God. Theirs is faith without the works of obedience, and this kind of faith never earns God's good favor. God is pleased only by the faith that moves us to trust Him and which overflows in love for and obedience to Him.

- **When have you been tempted to think simple belief or head knowledge equals favor with God?**
- **How do you need to grow in obedience as evidence of true faith and love?**

DAY FOUR

JAMES 2:20-24

While the demons serve as a picture of a worthless kind of faith, Abraham is a great example of genuine faith. James teaches that Abraham was “justified by works.” However, Romans 3:28 teaches “that a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law.” On the surface, this may not make sense. However, when we understand where each writer is coming from, the whole picture comes together. Romans 3 emphasizes that no amount of good works can save us when those works aren’t motivated by genuine trust in Jesus for salvation. Those who think they can get to heaven by being a “good person” are tragically mistaken. However, James reminds us that faith which isn’t accompanied by obedience isn’t real faith in the first place. Genuine faith is accompanied by good works—every time! Abraham, the father of our faith, showed this in the ways he lived.

- **When have you been tempted to think God is pleased with you based on your good works?**

- **How can you make sure your obedience flows from genuine faith instead of obligation or self-righteousness?**

DAY FIVE

JAMES 2:25-26



Rahab’s story is altogether different from Abraham’s. She was a prostitute in the land of Jericho, and when Joshua sent spies to her city, she allowed them to stay with her. The king received word that these spies were there and sent men to Rahab’s house to arrest them. Because Rahab believed in the God of Israel, she protected the spies and at her own risk. James’ point is this—because Rahab believed, she acted. Following Jesus isn’t simply a matter of thinking and believing, but of trusting and doing. It’s a life of obedience that proves our faith is alive.

- **What is God calling you to do that may cost you something?**

- **What is the difference between faith that is dead versus faith that is alive?**