

Long Story Short: God With Us

Reflect

- Describe an event in your life that you expected, but it came about in an unexpected way.
- Discuss what this biblical thought means to you, "God's ways are not our ways".
- What does it mean to you in practical terms to "trust God"?
- IN what ways do you struggle with letting God be God and trusting Him with your whole life?

Read Your Bible

- Isaiah 7: 1-16a
- Matthew 1: 18-23

Apply God's Word to Your Life

1. Ahaz the King was in a crisis. The kingdom he ruled was in peril. Discuss why people of deep faith and even those on the fence look to God when they are in crisis.
2. What do you expect from God when you are in crisis? Do you expect the unexpected? Do you expect God's ways to be your ways? Discuss
3. Ahaz gave a wise answer saying he would not put the Lord to the test. IN other words he would not try and tell God what to do. What can we learn from Ahaz's example about trusting God?
4. God gave a sign to Ahaz that he could not have possibly understood in the big plan of God's work of salvation for all saying a virgin would conceive and bear a son called Immanuel, God with us. How does knowing that God has a big plan for you and me even in the crisis of life help you keep on keeping on as a person of faith?
5. There are moments or events in life, if we have the eyes to see or faith to receive, where God's unexpected ways surprise us. We need to be ready for them. Joseph somehow was able to put his arms around taking Mary as his wife and embracing God's unexpected ways. What do you think made Joseph "tick" and what can you learn from his example?
6. A person of faith seeks to live with this question before them, "God what are You up to in this world and what does that mean for me?" Discuss both the wisdom and the challenges you face as a human being of seeking to live your life this way.
7. Based on the scriptural examples of Ahaz and Joseph define "trusting God" and what that means for you and then seek to live into that definition.

Because we are human and not God we cannot see the big picture in terms of God's plans and how He works out His plans amidst the brokenness of our lives and this world. The result is that we tend to want to help God manage the way He does things. If we are faithful and in touch with the promises of God our intentions and the end goal we have in mind may even be in line with God's plans, but because my ways are not God's ways we can miss His unexpected surprises. We can miss out on opportunities to join with God in His work in this world. We can even find ourselves at odds with what God is doing in our lives. To be at our best as people of faith we need to let God be God and work at trusting Him by asking the question, "what are you up to God and what do You expect of me?"

Pray

Father in Heaven my faith looks up to You. I know Your ways are not my ways and that I need to work at trusting You with all my heart, soul, mind and strength. Forgive me when I try to take over Your job and put myself in Your place. Instead Lord I desire to be open to what You are up to in this world and to be used by You for Your kingdom's goals. Give me eyes to see and the wisdom to respond to Your call upon my life. In Jesus' name. Amen.