

A LIVING NIGHTMARE!

During the month of December, we will study the season for reason- “the birth of Jesus Christ.”

Last week we studied Matthew’s unique Christmas genealogy of the birth of Jesus Christ. This week we will study Matthew’s unique Christmas story of how Joseph learned of the birth of Jesus Christ and how it impacted his life personally.

For some believers, they can put their fingers on some encounter with the Living God that forever changed their lives (Saul of Tarsus on a road; Samaritan woman at a well; and Joseph in a bed). **It is my prayer that it may be this bible study for you.**

Today’s lesson comes from examining our lesson text by the following five homiletical points of Joseph’s Living Night Mare:

- **Discovery**
- **Decision**
- **Dream**
- **Doctrine**
- **Drill of faith cycle**

We will learn from this lesson that a believer’s life can be changed for the better or for the worst in a split second of time. Whether it is for the “better” or for the “worst” will depend upon your ability to spiritually process the directive will of God correctly.

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| <p>This lesson will help you learn how to spiritually process conflicts in your life.</p> |
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1. Matthew introduces us to Joseph in the midst of a major crisis in his life.

Joseph has just **discovered** (heurisko / a.p.ind) that Mary was 3 months pregnant by someone else’s child (Matt.1:18).

Notice that he also discovered that Mary was pregnant “by Holy Spirit” (ek+ablative of source) [without a definite article – “the”] both **of these discoveries are important to how he spiritually processed his crisis and to our lesson.**

Joseph’s heart changed from ‘woo’ing to ‘woe’ing in his relationship with Mary. His heart changed based on what he discovered and believed to be true. But, what was it that was true and what wasn’t true that formed the basis for what he believed to be true?

He is in crisis mode because of **how** he is thinking (Prov.23:7).

- What did he believe about Mary’s pregnancy? _____
- What didn’t he believe? _____

2. Before giving us Joseph’s decision, Matthew informs us that Joseph is a spiritually mature believer.

The Greek text: (eimi [is] p.a.ptc) (dikaios [**righteous**] [with no definite article] [**He was experientially righteous**] (Matt.1:19).

- Joseph's ability to categorize his problem doctrinally is a sign of his spiritual maturity.
- Joseph is attempting to make a correct decision regarding Mary's pregnancy based on his relationship with God and the Word of God.

However there is a conflict of wills in his spiritual processing.

- The reason there is a conflict at this point is because he has rejected Mary's testimony.
- How has Joseph reached a decision (enthumeomai / a.p.ptc) (Matt.1:20) from the Word of God without considering Mary's testimony?

Joseph chose to believe that Mary's pregnancy was not only wrong, but sinful. He concluded that Mary committed adultery in spite of her testimony. Why didn't he give her the benefit of the doubt?

He had reached a point with what he was willing to do and not willing to do regarding Mary's pregnancy.

Where he was:

- Willing to divorce her privately
- Willing to take the heat for her pregnancy
- Willing to do the will of God no matter the cost personally

He was not:

- Not willing to marry her
- Not willing to publicly humiliate her
- Not willing to accept her side of the story

At this point, his life has become a Living Night Mare. But how much of this Living Night Mare is his doing and not Mary's?

His decision to not marry was based on his 'old man' insecurities and fear. It has shut down his spiritual processing and faith cycle. Joseph has convinced himself that his crisis is due to Mary, when in fact it is due to Joseph.

Principle: False assumptions lead to false interpretations lead to false expectations lead to false applications.

3. It had been an agonizing struggle for Joseph, but he believes that he had reached the correct decision to divorce Mary.

Therefore God had to engage Joseph outside his own consciousness of 'old man' thinking by a dream.

Joseph did a very smart thing, whether by choice or by circumstances – **He slept on the decision before doing it** (Matt.1:20-21).

Because Joseph is positive to Word and Will of God, God was faithful to correct his doctrine for application in a dream (1 Thess.5:24; Rom.8:28).

4. Notice the first thing God addressed before correcting his doctrine (Matt.1:20-23).

God addressed his 'old man' insecurities:

(Matt.1:20) "Do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for that which has been conceived in her is by Holy Spirit."

Principle: Our walk by faith is only as strong as our weakest old man insecurity! (2 Cor.5:7).

Joseph's 'Old Man' insecurities were interfering with the Directive Will of God! (Rom.12:2).

Once his 'Old Man' [Human Viewpoint] insecurities were addressed, God was able to change what he believed by providing him with 'New Man' [Divine Viewpoint] thinking and encouragement to apply the "faith cycle drill" (Eph.4:22-24; John 8:32).

5. We see how the Permissive and Over-Ruling Will of God work to achieve the Directive Will of God in the life of a spiritually mature believer (**read – Matt.1:22**). Joseph went to bed singing Blue Christmas and woke up singing Joy to the World! **What changed?**

Joseph's solution to his problem, as a spiritually mature believer, was written in the Word of God years before the need for it to be applied - in the reality of his life's circumstances!(Matt.1:23; Isa.7:14).

Notice the drill of the faith cycle (Matt.1:24-25). Mary had already gone through the faith cycle drill (Luke 1:38).