



FEAR NOT

Fear Not, Joseph

#npfearnot

Week 3
3 of 4

December 17, 2017

Bottom Line: Fear NOT, it's part of the plan.

Icebreaker: Did you believe in Santa as a child? Why or why not? Were you ever afraid of him?

Key Verse: *This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. Joseph, to whom she was engaged, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly. As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. "Joseph, son of David," the angel said, "do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit."* Matthew 1:18-20

To say Joseph was a good man is making a huge understatement. He was so good that out of all the Jewish men available at the time Christ was to be born, God the Father Himself chose Joseph to be the earthly caretaker of His Son, Jesus Christ. Yet Joseph was 100% human, and just like you and me—he could be disabled by fear. When Mary told him she was pregnant, and because of their purity as a couple he knew he couldn't be the father, he was of course very afraid. Despite her assurances that she HAD been faithful, and that the child was God's child, Joseph was full of fear. How could this be possible—he had never known her to be anything but true and faithful to God and himself, but really? What would people think? What would his own family think? That he had been unfaithful; that he was unworthy? That his reputation was a joke? And what if she wasn't truthful? What if he was wrong? Rejection surely would be in his future.

The angel assured him that she was truthful—that he didn't need to be afraid to trust God. This all was part of the plan. We all need assurance from God, especially those of us who live with the fear of rejection. Living for approval is a miserable way to live. Approval addiction will disable and shackle me, keeping me from God's great plans. Fear not; it's part of the plan.

THINK IT OVER >>>

What impacted you most specifically from the weekend message?

Discuss: "Living for approval is a miserable way to live." When in your life have you found that to be true?

What Bible characters can you remember who caved in to their fear of rejection?

On a very personal level, what do you think might have been Joseph's reaction to finding that Mary was pregnant, even by God? Do you think he was disappointed? Do you ever have to work through your disappointment with things that you DO believe are God's plan, but not the way you would have chosen?

God doesn't usually send angels today. How have you found Him to convince you to move past fear?

LOOK IT OVER <<<

Dwight said three signs of being afraid of disapproval are taking criticism personally, fearing rejection, and having difficulty saying no. What would you add to these?

The fear of disapproval and rejection will make us susceptible to manipulation and peer pressure, keep us from speaking the truth, prevent us from giving and receiving love, isolate us, create depression and unhappiness, and silence our witness. Christ-followers as great as the apostle Paul have had to face this demon and conquer it. They did it by "taking every thought captive and presenting it to Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:5). How would you explain the process of capturing your thoughts and giving them to Christ?

Discuss: "When we play to the Audience of One it will break the cycle of disapproval."

NEXT STEPS

This week consider taking some next steps together as a group:

1. Is there anyone with whom you have not shared Christ/an invitation to church because you have been concerned about how they might react?
2. Share that person with the group, commit to inviting that person to Christmas Eve services, and pray together for the people who need the witness.

EVALUATION/ACTION

Realizing and reaching your full potential in Christ

Bottom Line: Fear NOT, it's part of the plan.

Rate yourself from 1 to 10 1 (never), 10 (always)	1	2	3	4		6	7	8	9	10
Why did you give yourself this rating?										
What benefits will you obtain by raising your rating?										
Do you know someone who demonstrates this bottom line well? What do you admire about that person?										
What specific action can you put into practice to raise your rating?										
At the end of this week, reflect - where did you see the bottom line show up in your actions throughout the week?										

PRAYER

List group members and their prayer requests for this week:

DAILY STUDY

Want to dig deeper? Check out **The Daily** this week at newpointe.org/daily:

Monday: Proverbs 29:25; Luke 6:26

Tuesday: 1 Samuel 13:23; John 12:43-44

Wednesday: 1 Corinthians 4:3

Thursday: Hebrews 2:7; John 15:15

Friday: 2 Timothy 1:7

Don't let the conversation stop here. Keep talking it over with others throughout the week.

(Don't forget to bring this paper to your next small group meeting)