

# Near...

Part 3: Risking Your Reputation

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A sterling reputation is better than striking it rich;  
A gracious spirit is better than money in the bank.  
– Proverbs 22:1 (*The Message*)

It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes  
to ruin one. If you think about that, you'll do things differently.  
– Warren Buffet

## Matthew 1:18-19

<sup>18</sup> This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

**The Facts:** Joseph is betrothed (promised) to Mary (*vs. 18a*)

Before the wedding, Mary gets pregnant (*vs. 18b*)

Joseph is a righteous man with a solid reputation (*vs. 19a*)

Joseph has four options (*vs. 19b*): Death

Divorce

Deny

Defend

## Matthew 1:20-25

<sup>20</sup> But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

<sup>22</sup> All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet:  
<sup>23</sup> "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" —which means, "God with us."

<sup>24</sup> When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. <sup>25</sup> But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

## In response to God's call, Joseph releases:

- His plan for God's plan (*vs. 20a*)
- His fear (*vs. 20b*)
- His reputation (*vs. 24*)
- His right to name his own son (*vs. 25b*)

(Continues on back)

We struggle to release our reputations because  
we all struggle with pride.

**Joseph exchanged his earthly reputation for  
an opportunity to hold the Son of God.**

Draw near to God and he will draw near to you.  
– James 4:8

### **On Your Way Home**

On your way home today, take a few moments to observe the different ways people are “accomplishing” Christmas. What do you think Jesus would say to them as they prepare for Christmas Day? Remember – God loves them!

#### **Small Group Discussion Questions**



- 1) What's your favorite Christmas movie? Why do you like it so much?
- 2) Does Christmas bring out any fears in you? What's the biggest one?
- 3) If you were Joseph, which of the four options listed above would honestly have chosen? How does that affect the way you view this common man?
- 4) Why do you think Joseph sacrificed his good reputation? What would have to occur for you to be willing to do the same?
- 5) How has God drawn near to you this Christmas season?
- 6) How can we pray for you tonight?