



We all love to add some extra decorations at the Christmas season. This series wants to add some extra characters to the Christmas story who can add some needed “extras” to our own faith journey.

These questions are designed to extend the impact of the weekend message. Use them to go deeper in your personal study time, with your family and/or with a group.

1 What’s your favorite “unexpected” detail in the Christmas story? What is one “unexpected” way God has worked in your life lately?

2 A RIGHTEOUS DILEMMA. Joseph’s story gives us a new understanding of extra righteousness. **Read Matthew 1:18-19.** What do you learn about Joseph from these verses? How did Joseph’s desire to put Mary away secretly speak to his personal righteousness?

3 Joseph reminds us that doing right does not mean life always goes right. Read Matthew 1:20-25. Joseph is clearly wrestling with his understanding of what the law expects and his understanding of what Mary needs. Why do you think God gave Joseph some space to wrestle with this tension? When have you been convicted to do the right thing when life wasn’t going right? What did you learn from that experience?

4 REAL RIGHTEOUSNESS... Obeys God when it costs. Joseph was not responsible for Mary’s pregnancy, but he took on the responsibility of caring for her and her son. In what ways did Joseph’s obedience cost him? Follow up discussion: Rick said that “Joseph lost his life for Jesus.” **Read Mark 8:34.** As you reflect on your life what is one thing your obedience to God has cost you? How has that been a good thing?

5 REAL RIGHTEOUSNESS... Loves people when it’s hard. Rick noted that “Loving people is hard, because people can be very unrighteous. But Joseph was wrestling with how to be full of grace and truth.” How have you experienced that in your life recently? Share some examples from Jesus’ life of how he responded to unrighteous people with grace and truth. Who might God be calling you to love in a similar way this Christmas?

6 A RIGHTEOUS ANSWER. Rick said, “At the core of the Christmas message is the truth that being good will never be good enough. Joseph was one of the first to realize this.” **Read Matthew 1:21 and 2 Corinthians 5:21.** In what ways does Christmas remind us that **Jesus is our true righteousness**?

7 So what are we going to take away from this lesson? Consider the three options Rick mentioned as he closed and talk about what God might be calling you to do in response: (1) *Maybe God is calling you to be more courageous when it comes to an area of obedience.* (2) *Maybe God is calling you to do what is right even when life does you wrong.* (3) *Maybe this Christmas God is calling you to love someone more than they deserve because this is how He loves you.* What is one thing you can do this week as a result of what you’ve learned from this message? Pray for each other as you close.

