



## **Hope of a Breakthrough**

### **Personal or group-based guide for additional study**

**Small Group Guide:** Hope for a Breakthrough  
Based on Matthew 1:18-25 and Isaiah 7:14

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#### **Opening Prayer**

Begin with prayer, asking God to open hearts and minds to receive hope and direction through this discussion.

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#### **Ice Breaker (5-10 minutes)**

Share a time when someone changed their mind about something important to you. How did that change impact your situation?

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#### **Sermon Recap (5 minutes)**

This message explored how God gave hope to Joseph and Mary during an impossible situation. Despite facing shame, confusion, and potential death, they received hope through God's word, His promises, and His presence. Their story reminds us that God is still working behind the scenes in our lives today, even when circumstances seem overwhelming.

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#### **Key Takeaways**

- God gives hope by giving His word** - He provides revelation and direction for our situations
- God invites us to partner with Him** - We have the privilege of being part of His bigger plan
- God knows how to change people's minds** - He can shift circumstances and hearts in our favor
- God keeps His promises** - Emmanuel means "God with us" - He comes near when we need Him most
- God can do it Himself** - When others refuse or reject, God creates His own way forward
- Obedience demonstrates hope** - Joseph's immediate action showed his trust in God's word



## Discussion Questions

### Understanding the Text (15 minutes)

1. Read Matthew 1:18-25 together. What stands out to you most about Joseph's response to this situation?
2. Why do you think God chose to work through such a complicated and potentially shameful situation to bring Jesus into the world?
3. The sermon mentioned that Joseph had hope because "God gave him a word." What was that word, and why was it so important?

### Personal Reflection (20 minutes)

4. The pastor said, "God still gives hope by giving a word on how to handle our situations." When has God given you a specific word or direction during a difficult time? How did it change your perspective?
5. Mary faced potential death by stoning, yet she trusted God's plan. What situation in your life requires that level of trust right now?
6. The sermon stated, "Whatever the turmoil you're experiencing, it is bigger than just us, but we get the privilege to partner with God." How does viewing your current struggle as part of God's bigger plan change how you see it?

### Application and Action (20 minutes)

7. Joseph woke up and immediately obeyed what the angel told him. The pastor asked, "Is there something that you have yet to do because your hope is not really real yet?" What is God calling you to do that you've been delaying?
8. The message mentioned that "God knows how to help people change their minds." Who in your life do you need to trust God to work on, rather than trying to convince them yourself?
9. "God comes near" (Emmanuel) was highlighted as a key promise. In what area of your life do you most need to experience God's nearness right now?
10. The sermon addressed current events and unsettling times. How do we maintain hope when we see troubling events in our nation, community, or families?



## Practical Applications

Choose one or two of these to commit to this week:

- **Write it down:** Journal about a promise God has given you that you're still waiting to see fulfilled. Write out why you can still have hope.
- **Act with urgency:** Identify one thing God has been telling you to do and take action on it this week. Don't delay any longer.
- **Pray specifically:** Create a list of people whose minds you want God to change. Commit to praying for them daily this week instead of trying to convince them yourself.
- **Share your story:** Tell someone this week about a time God kept His word to you, giving them hope through your testimony.
- **Practice Emmanuel:** Each day this week, pause three times to acknowledge "God with us" - recognizing His nearness in your current circumstances.
- **Study the genealogy:** Read Matthew 1:1-17 and notice how God worked through imperfect people and messy situations. Let this build your hope.

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## Group Prayer Time (10-15 minutes)

### Prayer Focus Areas:

- For breakthrough in situations where hope seems lost
- For obedience to act on what God has already told us to do
- For those facing government or societal pressures and injustices
- For God to change the minds of specific people in our lives
- For awareness of how God is inviting us to partner with Him
- For the faith to believe God keeps His promises

### Closing Challenge

This week, when you face discouragement or doubt, remember: "If He died and got up, He's got enough power to turn your situation around." Our hope is not just in the birth of Jesus, but in His death, resurrection, and living presence today.

**Memory Verse for the Week:** "The Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel." - Isaiah 7:14