

# MATTHEW 1:12-17 | GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

## ICE BREAKER

**Question:** What are five professions that we tend to consider trustworthy? (I.E. police officer)

**Question:** Why? What is it about those professions or our society that make those people seem trustworthy?

## CENTERING FOCUS

Take five minutes and practice the discipline of silence together. Begin by having everyone close their eyes and breathe deeply. Quiet your mind. Allow the worries, concerns, and distractions to dissipate from your mind.

Leader...

\*Set a timer on your phone so that you're not focused on the time. Remind everyone that movement will happen. Sounds will occur. Distractions will take place. It's ok. If your mind is bombarded with tasks, concerns, squirrel... that's fine. Just allow the thoughts to happen and pass through. Utilize the word "peace" as an anchor. Anytime your mind begins to wander simply say the word peace silently to yourself and refocus your attention on Jesus.

Begin by praying this prayer with the group. Start the timer.

*"Father, please quiet our minds and still our hearts. Protect us from the distractions that plague our thoughts stirring anxiety within our hearts. Please, fix our eyes on Jesus as we silently come before you to listen. Draw near to us. Allow us to feel your divine presence in our midst. May we be attentive to the still, small, quiet voice of your Spirit."*

## LAST WEEK'S CHALLENGE

**Question:** How did your practice of silence go this week? As we've been putting this into practice over the past few weeks what has God taught you about yourself or himself?

## THOUGHT PROVOKING QUESTION

**Question:** Why do we tell kids not to talk to strangers?

**Question:** Would anyone mind telling us about a time where you had to trust someone whose track record was questionable.

**Question:** What do you need to know about someone in order be able to put your trust in him or her?

## ENGAGING WITH SCRIPTURE

Read this passage of Scripture together:

**Deuteronomy 7:6–9 (ESV):** *For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but it is because the Lord loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Know therefore that the Lord your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations*

**Question:** What are five different verbs associated with God in this passage?

**Question:** What are the two reasons given why God stuck with the people of Israel?

*\*It is not because \_\_\_\_\_, but it is because \_\_\_\_\_.*

**Question:** When Moses is describing God in verse 9 what word does he ascribe or give to God's character?

**Question:** In the Psalms the writers recount and praise God for the practical ways God had been faithful in their lives. How has God demonstrated his faithfulness in your life?

**Question:** Is it easy or more difficult for you to see the ways God has been faithful in your life? Why do you think that is?

Read these passages of Scripture together:

**2 Thessalonians 3:3 (ESV):** *But the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one.*

**Hebrews 10:23 (ESV):** *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.*

**1 John 1:9 (ESV):** *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

**Question:** What do these verses help us understand about God's faithfulness and our salvation?

**Question:** When it is difficult to see God’s faithfulness in our lives, what act of God can we look to in order to remember this aspect of His character?

Read these passages of Scripture together:

**John 3:16 (ESV):** *For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.*

**Romans 5:6-8 (ESV):** *For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

**Question:** How does Jesus perfectly embody the faithfulness of God?

## **NEW CHALLENGE**

This week we are continuing our practice of silence. We will do this through the “Be Still” prayer. Make an effort to make space for this practice once a day this week.

Find a quiet room or secluded place outside. Put away your phone and any other distractions. Situate yourself in a comfortable position.

Close your eyes and take 3-4 long, slow, deep breaths in and out. Then listen in your mind to the phrase from Psalm 46:10 in descending order...

“be still and know that I am God” (take a slow deep breath in and out)

“be still and know that I am God” (take a slow deep breath in and out)

“be still and know that I am” (take a slow deep breath in and out)

“be still and know that I am” (take a slow deep breath in and out)

“be still and know” (take a slow deep breath in and out)

“be still and know” (take a slow deep breath in and out)

“be still” (take a slow deep breath in and out)

“be still” (take a slow deep breath in and out)

“be” (take a slow deep breath in and out)

“be” (take a slow deep breath in and out)

Try to picture God speaking it over you.

Once your finished spend 2-5 minutes in silence simply being with God.

**Question:** How/when will you put this into practice this week? How can we help encourage you in this challenge this week?