

## Trust

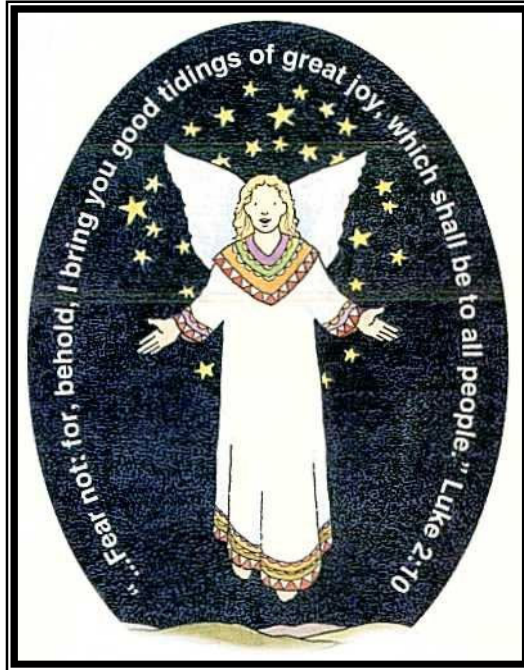
Trust can be rebuilt when it has been broken, but this does not happen automatically. Such a process takes work and commitment, especially when a relationship has been characterized by broken promises. This was the challenge that Joseph and Mary faced.

Months before their planned wedding, Mary became pregnant. Because Joseph knew that this was not his child, he assumed that Mary had been unfaithful to him. Though he was troubled by doubts and anger, he chose to break off the engagement as quietly as possible. He was a man of integrity and mercy, so he did not want to hurt or embarrass Mary.

God had other plans, however. He sent an angel to explain things to Joseph. Because Joseph believed God, his perspective changed. Mary and Joseph's mutual commitment to God and trust in Him served as a foundation upon which their trust in each other could again be established. Joseph and Mary were open to God's will and were willing to change their opinions about one another and the circumstances of their lives. In the process they also learned that things are not always what they seem and that relationships should not be destroyed by assumptions that are not confirmed with facts.

***Now this is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant by the Holy Spirit. Joseph, her fiancé, being a just man, decided to break the engagement quietly, so as not to disgrace her publicly. As he considered this, he fell***

***asleep, and an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. "Joseph, son of David," the angel said, "do not be afraid to go ahead with your marriage to Mary. For the child within her has been conceived by the Holy Spirit. And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All of this happened to fulfill the Lord's message through his prophet: "Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and he will be called Immanuel (meaning, God is with us)."***<sup>4</sup> ***When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord commanded. He brought Mary home to be his wife, but she remained a virgin until her son was born. And Joseph named him Jesus.*** (From Matthew 1)



Trust in God is foundational for trust between people. Even though it is challenged, trust can always be rebuilt if God is at the center of the relationship. We have a choice each day to live with faithfulness and integrity in our work relationships, our friendships, and our families as we continuously

filter our perspective about the relationship according to God's voice. Are we acting as people of integrity in the relationship? Are we asking God for His guidance and His direction in how we relate and the decisions we make? Are we willing to offer forgiveness and live in peace with the other person when God walks us through a challenge to the relationship?

### Questions For Reflection And Discussion

1. What kind of emotional reaction do I have when someone I love disappoints me or even betrays me?
2. What do I hope the other person will do when I have done something to break trust in a relationship?
3. What does it mean to be committed to someone? How is that commitment meant to influence my choices when a relationship is strained?
4. How can trust be rebuilt?
5. How does my relationship with God influence my ability to rebuild trust and live out commitment?