

December 17th

So Joseph is thinking. Keep Mary, marry her, and claim the child who is not his as his own. Or divorce her and walk away “clean” in the eyes of the Law. The choice is entirely his, and the Law of Moses is entirely in his favor.

How is Joseph described in **Matthew 1:19a**?

So God has put the spirit of Moses within Joseph, giving him the ability to avoid a hasty and unwise decision.

So he gives himself time to think, time to consider, time to pray.

Matthew 1:19 – Then Joseph her husband, being a _____ man, and not wanting to make her a _____ example, was minded to put her away _____

He is watching her belly grow with a child. And children are important.

And he is considering if that child really could be the promised Christ.

If He is, then Joseph would not want to miss out on the godly possibilities.

But if he is not, then Joseph would be “stuck” with an unfaithful wife and an unrelated child.

So he takes her away from public speculation, public gossip, and public judgment.

And he thinks.

Matthew 1:20a – But while he _____ about these things ...

He prays. Asking God to reveal the truth. Asking God to let him know if Mary is honorable as he originally suspected. Asking God to help him make the right decision.

And then God steps it up, giving Joseph the same guidance that He gave Zacharias and Mary.

Matthew 1:20a – But while he _____ about these things, behold, an _____ of the Lord appeared to him in a _____ ...

So not Gabriel, as Zacharias and Mary met.

Not face to face, as Zacharias and Mary saw.

But still a heavenly messenger to speak peace and life into his anxious and confused heart.

Speaking to him when he is most open to receive the truth.

Speaking to him when he is least able to argue and suggest.

Going Deeper:

1. *Why does the angel come to Joseph in a dream instead of face-to-face like he did with Mary?*

2. *What do Joseph's actions in verses 19 and 20 tell us about him and the kind of man he really is? What do they reveal about his possible feelings toward Mary?*

3. *What possibilities does Joseph have to consider?*

4. *How does public opinion sway/influence your decisions? How important is it to you?*

5. *How does God normally speak to you? Does He talk more in dreams and visions or can you more often hear an audible voice or do you more often feel a gentle tug at your heart?*

6. *How would YOU react if you were Joseph?*
