**Month 1-Week 1**

**Day One:** Matthew 1: 1-17 **Jesus’ Genealogy** (also seen in Luke 3:23-38)

This seems like a boring list of names – the lineage of Jesus. But it was important for the Jews. The Messiah was to come from the Lineage of David… so you will see three distinct groupings of 14 generations each. Note, there are women in that list.

Find the name Tamar – she became a mother through rape, yet a part of Jesus’ past! Or Ruth – she was not even a Jew – you will recall she was a foreigner and Boaz’s second marriage… yet listed in Jesus’ lineage.

Guided reflections:

1. Does your “lineage” have some scandalous characters? Do you have some heroes in your family?

2. What story do you want to be told of you in future generations?

3. Have you had grandparents who prayed for you? Are you praying for your future generations?

4. Action step – maybe you could contact a relative and ask them about their faith story.

Guided prayer:

*“Loving God, I thank you for those in my past who have prepared me to be where I am today – the good, the bad and the ugly! Help me to be writing a story that is one of faithfulness to you. Allow me to be a guiding light to future generations. Amen”*

**Day Two**: Luke 1:1 – 24 **Foretelling of the birth of John the Baptist**

You will recall that the books, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are called the gospels. They tell the story of Jesus from 4 writers’ perspectives. The various stories might be slightly different in each book, so we will use all 4 gospels to tell the story of Jesus. We will look at Luke for the next few days since Luke is more expansive in the birth story.

Guided reflections:

1. Imagine what was going on through Zechariah’s mind… and Elizabeth. What would you have thought?
2. In vs 16-17, what was John’s life purpose according to the angel?
3. What was the result of Zechariah’s unbelief?
4. Vs 25 – have you ever felt like you have not measured up to other people?

Guided Prayer:

*“Loving God, you brought hope to Zechariah and Elizabeth… to accomplish the cosmic mission of preparing the way for the coming Messiah,; and you gave Elizabeth the desire of her heart – to have a child. Right now, the desire of my heart is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_... If you grant me this desire, may it be used for your glory as well. Amen”*

**Day Three:** Luke 1: 26 – 38 **Birth of Jesus foretold.**

None of the other gospels goes into the specifics of this story, so we need to read Luke. Gabriel was a busy angel in those days!

Guided reflections:

1. What were Mary’s issues/concerns about this message from the angel?
2. If an angel came to you and disrupted your life, what would be your issues/concerns?
3. I wonder why God chose to use the appearance of scandal to surround the birth of His Son?

Guided Prayer:

*“Creative and awesome God, I know that you do not need another set of parents for the birth of your son, but there are places and circumstances in our day and age that need your intervention. Do not allow my list of doubts and wonderings “how can this be” stand in the way of your using my life. Amen*”

**Day Four:** Luke 1: 39-45 – **Mary Visits Elizabeth**

This is the only place this part of the story is told. The connection of Elizabeth’s child and the child of Mary is made clear.

Guided reflections:

1. What were the similarities of these two birth stories?
2. Vs 43-44 show that even the unborn boys had some kind of connection.
3. Have you ever had a “sense” that God was in some circumstance? Maybe goosebumps or heart beating rapidly? What was going on?

Guided prayer:

 *“Oh God of goosebumps, help me to be aware when my spirit is quickened to know that You are present or are at work in what is going on around me. And for most of the time when there are no angels and not tickle bumps, may you still find me faithful. Amen”*

**Day five:** Luke 1: 46-56 **Mary’s Song of Praise**

Again, only Luke tells this part of the story – Mary is able to comprehend the awesomeness of what has been asked of her.

Reflections:

1. Mary has gone from “How can this be” to “WOW!!! Little ‘ole ME!” Have you danced with joy at God’s blessings in your life?
2. What is included in the litany of why Mary is Praising God?

Guided prayer:

*“ O God, I long to dance with joy over your mercy and favor… right now I make a list of all the ways you have blessed my life ( \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) With Mary, my soul magnifies your name. Amen”*