



Our Story: Too Good to be True | December 21, 2016

Discussion Guide

The Scoop

Sometimes it feels like the Christmas story is too good to be true. Take a second look at the actual story and see that there are many elements we would change to make the story say what we have wanted. This year, read it as true...not too good to be true.

Key Verse

Matthew 1:18-19 (NLT)

This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. Joseph, to whom she was engaged, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly.

Discussion

We have all heard a story that is too good to be true. Sometimes it comes from a friend, sometimes it comes from social media, and other times it's on the front page of a magazine while waiting in line at the grocery store. There is something in us that wants to believe it but we withhold trust. Some of us even modify the story in our heads to make it feel more believable.

1. What is an example of a story about which you remember thinking, "This is too good to be true"?
2. What are some stories in the Bible for which you think "This is too good to be true"?

The way we adjust stories in our heads or in conversation ever so slightly to make them more believable is exactly how we got to the point where Jesus was born in a peaceful, serene setting. Luke seemed to understand our propensity for stories when he wrote his account of the birth of Jesus. He starts by identifying his goal in writing an accurate account with facts to be checked against history.

3. What parts of the Christmas story do you know?
4. What parts have you heard may be a little off? What parts of the Christmas story have you debated or heard debated?

The other accounts of the birth of Jesus also have elements of real and gritty human stuff if you look for them. For example, Matthew's account shares Joseph's struggle with being engaged to a girl who is having someone else's baby (Matthew 1:18-19). It's a real story with real human issues. It's not too good to be true.

5. What would you be thinking and feeling if you were Mary or Joseph?
6. In what parts of your life can you relate to the various elements of the Christmas story?

What's Next?

This year, look for the story in the way that it is. Put the characters in the actual barn Jesus was born in. It's not too good to be true. It's just true.

The angel that appears to the shepherds tells them that the story is good news for all people. God has sent a savior—the Messiah—to live among us as one of us. This year reflect on God's sacrifice in coming to Earth to live among us. As you read and tell the story, do so with confidence that it is true, not too good to be true.