



Without God's presence, this world is a cold, dark, scary place, unsafe and unfit for image-bearers of God. But *with* God's ever abiding presence, says Dallas Willard, "this present world is a perfectly safe place for us to be." He won't forget you. He won't abandon you. And Matthew's genealogy gives us several reasons to hope that God is with us in the darkness, so we have no reason to fear.

**These questions are intended to deepen your experience of the message. Use them for your personal or family study time, or with an open Bible as you share the good news with your neighbor.**

**Group Introduction:** "Think of a time you were afraid, but then the presence of someone you trust made you feel safe."

**Helpful Resource:**

The Story of MLK's front porch speech:  
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/history/2021/01/18/mlk-house-bombed-montgomery-bus-boycott/>

**GENESIS OF JESUS.** Matthew 1:1 in Greek says this is the book of the "genesis" of Jesus Christ. Why is this significant? Compare John chapter 1. How is the birth of Jesus (and the story leading up to it) similar to Genesis?

**MLK: "GOD IS WITH US."** Discuss the story of Martin Luther King speaking to an angry crowd outside his own bombed-out house on the evening of January 30, 1956. He told the crowd to love their enemies, and to know "God is with us." How does this story bring light to a dark situation? How does this relate to how God is with us in dark times?

**WOMEN.** Read **Matthew 1:1-16**. Can you name the 5 women mentioned? What are their stories? Why do you think Matthew includes them here? Many of these women were "outsiders." Why is that significant? **Follow up:** Read **Heb 11:31; James 2:25**. How could someone with such a background be listed in the hall of faith?

**RETHINKING OUR HEROES.** Read **Matthew 1:1-16** again. What are some of the more sordid stories associated with some of the men we think of as "heroes of the faith"? Can you find the adulterers, the murderers, the cowards, the thieves, and the liars? And yet there they are...in the lineage...and God was with them. Discuss what this means to you.

**DO NOT FEAR.** Read **Psalm 23:4; Isaiah 43:1-5; Zechariah 3:14-17**. What does it mean for God to say "don't fear; I am with you"? **Follow up:** Read **Luke 1:29-30; 2:9-10**. How does Matthew's genealogy help affirm there is no need to fear, and that God is with Mary...and you?

**RETHINKING OUR FEARS.** What are your fears? What about your past makes you think God is not with you? What about your life—or things in your life—make you wonder if God is with you? Discuss and share how, in Christ, we have nothing to fear.