

“How to Handle Relational Stress”

Matthew 1:18-25

Let's look to the first Christmas to see how God can help us handle the relational stress we'll experience this Christmas.

A. Accept that relational stress is normal.

Matthew 1:18, 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.

B. Make good choices, respecting the other person.

Matthew 1:19, Joseph, her fiancé, was a good man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly.

C. Be open to God's intervention.

Matthew 1:20-21, As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. “Joseph, son of David,” the angel said, “do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. ²¹ And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”

D. Trust that God has been preparing you.

Matthew 1:22-23, All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord's message through his prophet: ²³ “Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means ‘God is with us.’”

E. Hear and obey God's commands.

Matthew 1:24-25, When Joseph woke up, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded and took Mary as his wife. ²⁵ But he did not have sexual relations with her until her son was born. And Joseph named him Jesus.

A closing prayer ... “Dear God, what a mess our relationships can become. And what a Savior You are! Lord, if You can save the world, I trust that You can intervene in my relationships. I invite You to intervene in our lives and bring Peace. Help us to hear You clearly, and follow You together. In Jesus' name, amen.”