





# Strength for the Journey

## “Interruptions”

Matthew 1:18-25



Notes:

5. How difficult is it for you to really believe that in the hands of God all things—even devastating interruptions—“work for the good” (Romans 8:28)?

Dotted lines for taking notes.

### **Digging Deeper:**

If your group has enough time (i.e., you’ve listened to the audio on your own), answer one or more of these optional questions.

1. How tempting do you think it was for some of the key characters of biblical history to resist the interruption God brought into their lives—for example, Noah and building a boat; Abraham and a journey to an unknown destination; Joseph and his adventures in Egypt; Job and his suffering; Jesus and the cross?

2. How does the life of Job serve as perhaps the best illustration of the biblical perspective that God stands as the sovereign sentinel at the gate of our lives and permits nothing to occur that He will not ultimately use for His glory, the gain of His cause, and our good?

3. Can you recall going to God’s Word in the midst of an interruption or problem and finding an option there that you hadn’t thought of previously?

### **Strength through Sharing:**

1. What is the most devastating interruption you can recall in your own life?

2. How prepared do you feel for the next major interruption? Read the “Call to Action” below. Are you willing to commit yourself now to surrendering to the interruptions that God will allow to come into your life this coming year?



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### Strength through Prayer:

Spend a few moments as a group in silent, personal prayer. Thank God for the testimony and example of Christians like Scott and Janet Willis, who demonstrate how to sorrow—not as those who have no hope, but by taking the long, eternal view of life. And prepare your heart, through prayer, for whatever comes your way in the coming year.

You may want to begin your prayer with these words:

“Dear God, I stand in awe of the wonder of the Christmas story and of Your plan of salvation. Thank You for the encouragement that comes from biblical saints, like Joseph and Mary, and contemporary saints, like Scott and Janet Willis. As I enter this new year, I want to commit myself in advance to surrender to both the minor and major interruptions that You allow into my life. Help me to trust You. Help me to trust Your Word, which assures me that “all things work together for good.”

When you are finished with this time for silent, personal prayer, you may want to move into a time of group prayer, praying for one another.

### Closing Call to Action:

Let this be your first New Year’s resolution, because you can count on the fact that God will bring an interruption into your life. The issue is not whether you will face interruptions, but how you will respond to them.

This year you may have to contend with impaired health, the loss of a loved one, the disappointment of a wayward child, a broken relationship, or a job loss or change. Will you be among those who have said, “OK, I surrender, and I will see what can be accomplished for God in this interruption and let Him do great things”? That takes faith. Can you trust Him when the interruption comes?

This also requires an understanding of what God’s Word tells us about responding to those interruptions. Search the Word. Call a Christian friend or pastor when the interruption comes and say, “Can you give me anything to trust from God’s Word in this moment?” And then kneel at the rock in Gethsemane with Jesus and say, “Lord, not my will but Yours be done.” Surrender your life to God, and let the significance of what He is doing flow.

Dotted lines for taking notes.